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BY SCOTT RITTER

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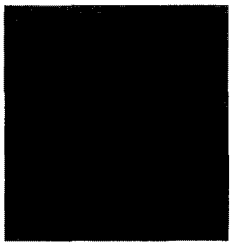

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CORRESPONDENCE

Gateskeeper

To the editors:

Yes, Microsoft has a monopoly on personal computer operating systems, and the company has been a bully in extending that monopoly into contiguous areas of computing, such as the browser market ("Software Baron," by Richard Wolffe, November 16). But consumers want just such a monopoly standard so that the various pieces of the silicon world will work together seamlessly (or, at a minimum, crash less often).

Someday, someone will come up with the next standard. The Wall will fall. In the meantime, no cure that I can think of is better than the disease of having Chairman Bill in the Computer Kremlin.

DONALD F. PADELFORD
Seattle, Washington

Legal wrong

To the editors:

Donald Schapiro and Robert A. Schapiro claim that one possible punishment for Clinton is "censure by Congress, possibly with a fine" ("Face the Music," November 16). But censure has been used only once against a president (Andrew Jackson in 1834), and it was "expunged" three years later. Furthermore, a fine would require a legislative act, or bill of attainder, which is specifically forbidden by the Constitution.

The authors also make an invalid comparison to Gerald Ford's pardon of Richard Nixon when they say: "If the president were impeached or if he resigned in the face of impeachment, then-President Gore might pardon him, following the precedent of Gerald Ford's pardon of Richard Nixon." But Nixon was never impeached; in fact, the full House had not even voted on formal articles of impeachment when he resigned.

NORTON N. BLACK
Tucson, Arizona

Athletic injury

To the editors:

In Steve Kettmann's "Out of Bounds" (November 16), Boston Red Sox General Manager Dan Duquette says of declared gays in sports: "It might be a hard sell to a family atmosphere, depending on the market." I guess an enterprise that advocates drug use, spousal abuse, and prostitute solicitation by pro athletes is more suitable for a family environment. Maybe we haven't come so far after all.

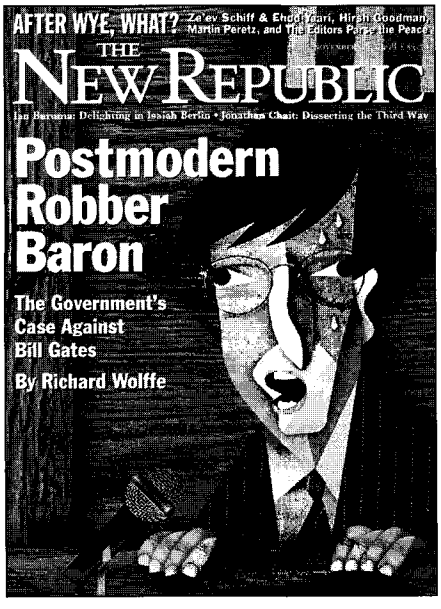
PALADIN MESZAROS
Walnut Creek, California

Bad egg

To the editors:

Professor Anthony Pagden's review of my *Conquests and Cultures* opens with the claim that I "can only really accept the existence of one civilization"—Western civilization in general and, more specifically, "the way of life lived in Great Britain from roughly the late eighteenth century on" and transplanted to the United States and other offshoot societies ("Culture Wars," November 16).

This incredible assertion is not backed



up by a single quotation from anything that I actually said because there is no statement of mine that can even be plausibly twisted to mean that. Moreover, there are innumerable statements throughout the book referring to other civilizations. For example, the very first chapter refers to "ancient civilizations in the Middle East" and states that "other great civilizations had already arisen (and some fallen)" in various parts of the world before the Roman Empire arose. Chapter Two alone is about British civilization and its offshoots overseas. Chapter Three refers to "the imprint of Islamic civilization" and states that "the Nile spawned the most famous of the civilizations developed in the African continent." Chapter Five refers to the fact that "a complex urban civilization" developed among the Maya, the Aztecs, and the Inca "before the Europeans arrived." In fact, Chapter Five is full of references to various pre-Columbian civilizations throughout the Western Hemisphere. The introduction states plainly: "The current cultural impact of the Western world on non-Western societies is neither new nor a unique phenomenon, and has lasted thus far nothing like the many centuries in which cultural advances radiated outward from China or the nations clustered around the eastern end of the Mediterranean."

It is not worth replying to the rest of the similarly phony claims made in Pagden's review. You don't need to eat a whole egg to know that it is rotten.

THOMAS SOWELL
Stanford, California

To the editors:

According to Anthony Pagden, Samuel Johnson told James Boswell that the neologism "civilization" was the ideal antinomy to "barbarism." This is the opposite of the truth. It was Boswell who made that claim to Johnson, and Johnson rejected it; he did not put that sense of "civilization" in the dictionary. The point has some importance, since Johnson (unlike Boswell) detested the way that Europeans had "civilized" the rest of the world: "The Europeans have scarcely visited any coast but to gratify avarice, and extend corruption; to arrogate dominion without right, and practise cruelty without incentive." To one enthusiast of civilization, William Julius Mickle, Johnson maintained that "it had been happy for the world, sir, if your hero Gama, Prince Henry of Portugal, and Columbus had never been born, or that their schemes had never gone farther than their own imaginations." Johnson may be a conservative icon, but he was no ally of Thomas Sowell.

LAWRENCE LIPKING
Evanston, Illinois

Anthony Pagden replies:

I know that Thomas Sowell recognizes the existence of "civilizations" in the plural. I said so in my review. Since, however, he refuses to define the term—or even to use it consistently—it is hard not to draw the impression that, whereas there may be many civilizations, for him there can be only one of any lasting significance. Indeed, if that is not his view, it is very hard to see what the book is supposed to be about. It is a shame that he has chosen not to take the time to sustain his assertion that all my other claims are similarly "phony." Had he done so, we might, after all, have something substantive to discuss.

To Lawrence Lipking, I can only apologize; my memory betrayed me.

Non sequitur

To the editors:

I have no quibble with Stanley Kauffmann's assessment of Todd Solondz's new film *Happiness* ("The Way We Love

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Now," November 9). But Kauffmann's description of Dylan Baker's character's problem, "his homosexual leanings—pedophile, moreover," perpetuates, perhaps unwittingly, a false correlation between homosexuality and pedophilia, a falsehood that has been used by bigots to spread fear and hatred of gay men. If the character had raped eleven-year-old girls, would Kauffmann have written about his heterosexual leanings? This is not a criticism of the film, which made an issue not out of the character's sexuality but his apparently uncontrollable pedophilia.

FREDRIC H. GOLDSTEIN
New York, New York

Stanley Kauffmann replies:
Fredric H. Goldstein *is* quibbling. I said, "pedophile, moreover," not "therefore, pedophile."

Doctor knows best

To the editors:
Sherwin B. Nuland's doctor-centered paternalism leaves awfully little room for the autonomy of the terminally ill patient considering suicide ("The Right to Live," November 2). If your doctor disagrees with you, you're trumped. If your family disagrees with you, you're trumped. If you're concerned about pain, you're probably misinformed. If you're concerned about being a burden to your family, you exemplify "economicism of the meanest sort." If you think you've simply reached the point where life is no longer worth living, you're depressed and not competent to make a decision.

Nuland's focus on the doctor, as opposed to the patient, reaches its peak in his two-full-page hymn to the Hippocratic Oath, after which he heroically pledges to stay with his dying patient "to the last heartbeat." Nuland may not believe it, but, when I think of the people I want around me at the moment of my death, my doctor is not one of them.

CHRIS LIEBIG
Iowa City, Iowa

To the editors:
Whatever happened to the simple cup of hemlock? If the account of Socrates's death is true, the cup of hemlock provided a peaceful, painless death. Although, in his case, it was administered as a sentence of death, it was said to be available on request, as I read in an account of ancient Greek medicine. But I don't know what, if any, "safeguards" were in place. Nuland's personal decision that he, or another doctor, should be the conscientious mediator sounds like a return to an ancient question.

ANNE A. MITCHELL
Plattsburgh, New York

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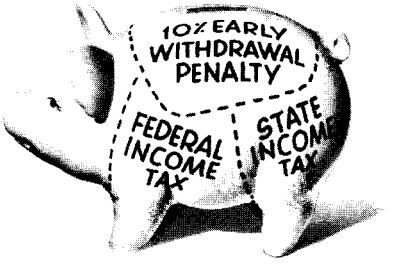

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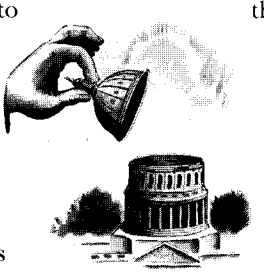
FROM WASHINGTON

Unimpeachable

Permit me to express a bit of editorial pride in our own legal affairs maven, Jeffrey Rosen. Summoned to testify before the House Judiciary Committee on whether the president's lies about sex might be an impeachable offense, Jeff delivered a razor-sharp analysis of the legal and constitutional issues raised by the investigation of President Clinton, concluding that censure, not impeachment, is the appropriate remedy for the president's misconduct.

Among the intriguing arcana sprinkled throughout Jeff's testimony was the fact that, until Reconstruction, defendants in the American courts were not required to testify under oath. It was just assumed their words would be self-serving and hence unreliable. Lately there's been a lot of huffing and puffing about whether the Founding Fathers *intended to include civil perjury under* the ambiguous rubric of "high crimes and misdemeanors." Jeff's observation would seem to settle the matter. If the Founding Fathers lived in a world where defendants never gave sworn testimony, how could they have intended to make it an impeachable offense for the president, as a defendant, to lie under oath?



Apart from that, it was all downhill. I've always felt that an impeachment proceeding—whatever its outcome—was the right way to deal with the Lewinsky scandal. The fact that it would be politicized was fine by me, since the Founding Fathers clearly foresaw that presidential wrongdoing would be an inherently political issue—and wanted to make members of Congress accountable to the people for how they dealt with it. I still think that, but these hasty Republican-orchestrated hearings are shaking my faith. There was, for starters, the bathetic testimony of Barbara Battalino, a convicted minor-league perjurer, summoned by the Republicans to serve as a living, breathing example of an ordinary American who did get punished for lying about sex. Before the committee, she testified (not under oath, fortunately) about the "humility, reverence, and awe" she felt at sitting in that vast chamber and the great burden she would bear forever as a result of her crime. The Republicans were pleased. They were so sympathetic that you would have thought Battalino was the *victim* of a crime.

Then there was Alan Dershowitz—never one to feel burdened by humility, reverence, or awe—jabbing the air with his finger and trying to turn the whole session into a hearing about perjury by the police. The wayward Judiciary Committee, the legendary defense counsel barked, "is like my typical client. First he commits the crime, and then he compounds the crime by making it worse." How would even a Dershowitz client go about compounding a crime by making it better?

Goaded by Dershowitz, Chairman Henry Hyde, his sense of humor fading along with his image as a paragon of nonpartisan deliberation, was moved to make the assertion that many on the committee were in "agony" over what to do, and even to claim that he had no idea how all the Republican members were going to vote. Lucky for Hyde he wasn't under oath when he said *that.*

The committee also solicited testimony on the importance of truth-telling from three retired military officers: Army General Thomas Carney, Admiral Leon Edney, and 86-year-old Admiral Thomas Moorer. (The latter participant in the seminar on truth is a highly credible witness whose latest cause has been promoting the unsubstantiated theory that TWA Flight 800 was brought down by a missile.) The Republicans recruited these men so they could muse about the impact the commander-in-chief's lies might be having on the good order and discipline of the Armed Forces. And the gist of their statements was all basically the same: If the troops can't count on the commander-in-chief to be straight with the public about his adulterous affairs and such, how can they have any faith in his orders to go to war?

Here, the Republicans managed to raise an issue that is both very real and very inappropriate. It is a real issue, because there has been a lot of

continued on page 45

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THE NEW REPUBLIC

DECEMBER 21, 1998

GAS UP

When Exxon and Mobil, the nation's two largest oil companies, announced their intention to merge this week, they were quick to note that the proposed deal wouldn't mean higher gas prices at their 48,000 service stations. But, while oil-industry analysts largely seconded this view—the new megacompany will account for only 13 percent of the U.S. market—consumers fretted. *The New York Times* queried the proverbial cab driver filling up at a Manhattan gas station, who duly pronounced: "It's going to drive the price up."

Actually, the companies have it right. The truth is that it's rarely been this cheap to drive in the United States—and it's getting cheaper. With oceans of new crude coming into the world market from the former Soviet Union, and with the slump in Asia driving down demand, the world is awash in low-priced crude. OPEC is on the run, and oil company profits are being squeezed. On the same day that Exxon and Mobil announced their merger (a probable harbinger of a broader industry shakeout), the Department of Energy reported that prices for regular unleaded gasoline had fallen to 97.4 cents per gallon, the lowest they'd been since the department started keeping track eight years ago. Moreover, the 97.4 cents-per-gallon price was three cents lower than it was a month ago, and far below last year's average of $1.15 per gallon. In real terms, prices are about half of what they were in March 1981. And even those 1981 prices are significantly lower than the gas prices in most other industrialized countries.

We have long said that gas prices should be higher. The current situation both confirms that view and presents a golden opportunity to raise prices in a way that will benefit the public as a whole rather than either OPEC or the Exxon Mobil Corporation. We propose a 17 cents-per-gallon increase in the federal excise tax on gasoline. According to the Congressional Budget Office, the government gets about $1 billion for every penny the gas tax rises. With an extra $17 billion a year or more at its disposal, the government could take greater steps toward solving the Social Security crisis, bolster the Earned Income Tax Credit, provide health insurance for more of the working poor, and maybe even reduce income taxes on lower- and middle-income people (who would, to be sure, bear the brunt of regressive taxes like the gas tax).

Would this be an unbearable burden on consumers? The beauty of our proposal is that a 17 cent increase would merely restore the price of gas to where it was last year—a level that was clearly compatible with high economic growth and consumer satisfaction. Does the government need more money during a period of budget surplus? An increase in federal revenues isn't the only—and perhaps not even the best—reason for a gas-tax hike. Just as important, an increase in gas prices would go a long way toward solving many of the negative side-effects of cheap gas. These "externalities," to use the economic term of art, are not as immediately recognizable to individuals as a 17 cent price hike at the pump. But they are just as costly to society, if not more so. Traffic jams, aggressive driving, suburban sprawl, air pollution, the cost of defending the Gulf, and quite possibly even global warming all trace, at least in part, to America's heavy consumption of cheap gas.

To take one obvious example of these sorts of costs, consider the recent surge in popularity of sport-utility vehicles. In the past couple of years, as gas prices have tumbled, the sales of gas-guzzling SUVs have skyrocketed. (Similarly, American automakers report that sales of the smaller, fuel-efficient cars they developed in the early '80s when they feared that gas prices might rise to $3 or $4 per gallon have slumped.) Even if you doubt the scientific evidence that suggests that emissions from fuel-inefficient SUVs disproportionately contribute to climate change, there's no doubting the safety menace these mammoths pose on America's roadways, where they too often turn what would be routine fender-benders between normal-size cars into fatal accidents.

We know this idea is almost certain to lose in Congress. And, to be sure, a modest increase in the gasoline tax would not, by itself, eliminate pollution; nor would it finance every federal program. But that doesn't mean there's no point in at least having a debate about the issue. After all, when we've reached the point where gas is cheaper than bottled water, perhaps our society's priorities are in need of a little fine-tuning. And we're not about to suggest a federal subsidy for Evian. •

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NOTEBOOK

A DISAPPOINTING VERDICT: And so, after an independent counsel spent more than four years and $17 million building his case against the former Secretary of Agriculture Mike Espy, it took a jury less than ten hours to demolish it. On December 2, Espy was acquitted on all 30 counts, including such charges as illegally accepting tickets to football games from lobbyists. This is really no surprise. As David Grann showed in these pages (see "Prosecutorial Indiscretion," February 2), Independent Counsel Donald Smaltz operated with no sense of moral or legal proportion. In an effort to prove his meager case, he trampled over the rights of ordinary citizens, indicted Espy's innocent brother, and stretched the law beyond recognition. Still, while Espy never deserved to go to jail, there is little satisfaction in this verdict, for it merely demonstrates another problem with criminalizing politics. In pre-independent counsel Washington, where shame and the electoral process kept sleazy but noncriminal behavior in check, Espy would have lost his job (as he did) and had his political career permanently ruined (as he should have). But, under the new system, which insists upon making every moral failing a crime, Espy can claim he never did anything wrong in the first place—which is precisely what he did claim as soon as he left the courtroom.

ARBEIT *MACHT DUMM*: We don't mean to seem too much like ourselves, but there were moments during the House Judiciary Committee's hearing on December 1 when we could be forgiven for thinking that the topic was "Perjury after Auschwitz." It started with a question that Representative John Conyers posed to Judge A. Leon Higginbotham: "How do we move toward the exit door with some small measure of grace?" Higginbotham sagely adverted to Justice Holmes's remark that a page of history is worth a volume of logic and suggested somewhat obscurely that "you have to put this within the corridor of history." And he continued: "The other thing is what is on Auschwitz. He who does not know the lessons of history will be doomed to repeat its worst mistakes." Is Higginbotham the only legal scholar alive who does not know the provenance of those words (or words much like them)? They are certainly not the words that are inscribed on that particular gate of hell. The philosopher who was most admired by the Führer was not Santayana. But things got worse. Representative Henry Hyde had his own reflection on the implications of the Holocaust for Bimbroglio: "Does the rule of law—have you been to Auschwitz? Do you see what happens when the rule of law doesn't prevail?" This broke new ground in scandal hyperbole. Even Hyde seems to have recognized the analytical weaknesses of his remark. "Now I don't leap from the Oval Office on a Saturday afternoon to Auschwitz," he continued. Well, good. Except that he doesn't not leap, either: "[B]ut there are similarities when the rule of law doesn't obtain, or when you have one law for the powerful and one for the nonaristocratic." The nonaristocratic? And one more thing. How could the president do that to the granddaughter of Holocaust survivors?

THE ENIGMATIC ALAN GREENSPAN:

Greenspan signals cut in interest rates

—*Montgomery Advertiser*, September 24, 1998.

Testimony signals possible rise in interest rates

—Same paper, same day, same article.

(Thanks to Joel Sanders of Montgomery, Alabama)

AN UP-AND-DOWN DAY ON WALL STREET:

Stocks rally after cut in interest rates

—*The Seattle Times*, November 17, 1998.

Third drop in past seven weeks fails to stimulate Dow

—Same paper, same day, same article.

(Thanks to Neil Heiman of Seattle, Washington)

Why Reno was right.

AL'S CLEAR

By Michael Kinsley

Attorney General Janet Reno's explanation for her second annual decision not to appoint an independent counsel to investigate Al Gore's 1996 campaign fund-raising is so thoroughly convincing that you wonder what the fuss was all about. And, indeed, no one seems to be challenging her conclusion that this latest accusation against Gore is too trivial and unlikely to bother with. Instead, Reno's critics are making the by-now-traditional argument that her ruling was too narrowly focused on such minutiae. We need an independent prosecutor to look into the whole mess, they say.

Yet the factoid that is now being dismissed as beside the point—new evidence that Gore may have lied to Justice Department investigators in an earlier chapter of this saga—was treated as quite spectacular when it came out last August. Remember all the big "MORE TROUBLE FOR GORE" headlines? Critics—primarily Republican politicians and the obsessed *New York Times* editorial page—brandished this new factoid as proof that Reno was missing the big picture. Now the factoid is discredited. So what supports the general accusation?

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The factoid in question was the existence of some handwritten notes taken by a Gore aide at a 1995 meeting attended by Gore. The notes were turned over to the Justice Department by Gore's office. The meeting was about an ad campaign for the 1996 election, and the notes included the phrase "65 percent soft/35 percent hard." This meant the ads were to be financed by a mixture of hard and soft money. Hard money is money raised officially for the campaign and subject to limits on the size and source of donations. Soft money is raised under various exceptions and loopholes in the campaign finance laws. You can raise soft money in bigger chunks from more sources, but you must be scrupulous to pretend it's not being spent in direct support of the candidate you favor.

Gore had said to FBI investigators during last year's chapter that he thought that only soft money was involved. This was important because Gore made some fund-raising calls from his government office, which is a no-no for hard money but not for soft money. The money Gore raised was actually distributed cavalierly between these two categories. So the notes seemed to make him a liar.

Gore maintains he missed any reference to the 65–35 split in the 1995 meeting—or certainly didn't remember this nugget when asked about it two years later. Only two of the 15 people listed as attending the meeting remember this subject coming up. The author of the notes doesn't even remember the meeting, though he doesn't deny the notes show he was there. Reno notes dryly that "[n]o one who arrived at the meeting without a working knowledge" of the hard-soft business as it related to the media campaign "left with an accurate understanding" of it. This may all be an elaborate cover-up, of course. Or you may find it plausible. I do. No normal human mind welcomes the absurd complexities of campaign finance laws to enter. Once past the barricades, they are hard to keep in your head for the time it takes to write about them, let alone for two years.

Reno's most telling point, though, is that Gore had no reason to lie. If he was truly aware of the hard money, he would have been better off to say so. Why? Because, at the time of Gore's phone calls, the Democrats already had all the hard money they needed for this particular media campaign, but they were short on soft money. Gore could have said he was aware that hard money was involved but that all he was raising was soft money. Gore's lawyers told him explicitly that saying he thought it was all soft money would get him into needless trouble. But he insisted that he had to say this because it was the truth.

(This last bit sounds so much like Al Gore's idea of Al Gore that you instinctively disbelieve it. But, as Reno lays out the case, it's hard to think of any other explanation.)

Whatever you make of all this, Reno is plainly correct that no prosecutor would ever bring a case against Gore in this situation, and therefore it would be wrong to appoint an independent counsel. Surely those who call for an independent counsel to look at the "big picture" have some obligation to come up with evidence of at least one alleged misdeed that could support a real-life prosecution. Instead they cite a flurry of allegations, none of which could stand up independently. Or they simply assert a need to clear the air of a general cloud of suspicion they have helped to create.

To be sure, the big picture is unattractive. The 1996 Clinton-Gore media campaign was probably the most brazen abuse yet of soft money. Republicans are especially upset because this violated a 20-year-old American tradition according to which the GOP exploits innovative new loopholes in one election cycle and the Democrats copy them in the next. But that doesn't make it illegal. Campaign finance laws should be obeyed to the letter, but, in a competitive democracy, there is not even an abstract moral obligation to obey them in spirit. All reforms of this sort tend to erode over time as people figure out ways to evade them. Tax reform is another example. That doesn't mean the reforms are bad or pointless. It just means that they need to be traded in for a new model after a certain number of years, just as your car does.

It's certainly time to trade in the rusted-through, post-Watergate campaign finance reforms. The Republican Congress, of course, has prevented precisely that, even as Republicans complain about Democratic campaign-reform abuses. They are right to point out that, logically, when someone breaks the law, this demonstrates flaws in that person, not in the law. But, when many people are behaving in ways that violate a law's spirit, though maybe not its letter, that probably demonstrates flaws in the law rather than in all those people.

On the subject of the independent counsel—the other big reform to emerge from Watergate—Republicans have tied themselves into even worse knots than on campaign finance regulation. They tried to kill the independent counsel statute and briefly succeeded in the early '90s, before discovering a new taste for it with the arrival of a Democratic administration. Many still denounce the law in the abstract, while making the strongest possible case for it in their insistence that Attorney General Reno can't be trusted to investigate and prosecute fellow members of the administration (including the person who hired and can fire her).

They make this argument in the abstract simply because they don't like her conclusions, not because of any specific evidence of corruption on her part. In the abstract, it's pretty persuasive—How can any administration be trusted to investigate itself?—which is why I still favor the independent counsel law, against all sophisticated opinion in both parties and in this magazine. Ken Starr's completely real abuses don't discredit the independent counsel law any more than Al Gore's purported violations—even if they were real—would discredit the campaign finance laws. And Janet Reno's refusal to push the independent counsel button without justification shows that the abuses are not built into the

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law. (And, if you disagree with me about Starr and Reno, just reverse the two illustrations and the argument still holds.)

The one reform I would like to see in the independent counsel law would be to make the office a permanent one, with a professional staff run by a prosecutor appointed for a set term. Let's face it: We're living in a political culture of permanent investigation. Every administration from now on is sure to have several independent counsels chasing after one or more of its members. A permanent independent counsel's office would acknowledge that reality. We would be spared these overwrought battles about whether to appoint one, with the unavoidable presumption of guilt built into any decision to do so. A permanent independent counsel would not have the same all-or-nothing incentive to nail someone, anyone, for something, anything. It's true that the president and other executive-branch higher-ups might not enjoy always having a cop car in the rearview mirror, but that doesn't bother me. You?

MICHAEL KINSLEY is the editor of *Slate* (*www.slate.com*).

A savior for Washington's has-beens.

FLYING HIGH

By Thomas Toch

Newt Gingrich may have resigned as speaker of the House, but he's hardly facing unemployment. The day after he stepped down, Gingrich dined with billionaire financier Theodore J. "Teddy" Forstmann—who immediately invited Gingrich to join the advisory board of Forstmann's investment company. Among its major holdings: Gulfstream Aerospace Corporation, where a long line of former high-ranking government officials have taken advantage of what has become a particularly lucrative—and not particularly taxing—version of the old Washington tradition of cashing in on the prestige of former offices.

Headquartered in Savannah, Georgia, Gulfstream is the world's largest maker of high-end corporate jets. Its planes are the Rolls-Royces of the sky—high-quality aircraft with cabins that cost up to $12,000 per square foot to decorate, satellite communications systems with phones, fax, and e-mail, and, fittingly, top-of-the-line BMW Rolls-Royce engines. Its latest $38 million model can fly 15 passengers and a crew of four nonstop from New York to Tokyo at 51,000 feet. Jack Nicklaus owns a Gulfstream; so do Oprah Winfrey, John Travolta, and Harrison Ford. But Gulfstream's primary buyers are the U.S. and foreign governments and big corporations. When Forstmann and his partners bought Gulfstream from the Chrysler Corporation for $850 million in 1990, it wasn't selling enough planes in those major markets and was in a financial tailspin.

A 58-year-old leveraged-buyout specialist, Forstmann is best known for his bitter and losing battle with arch-rival Henry Kravis for control of RJR Nabisco during the late '80s, an epic Wall Street struggle chronicled in the best-seller *Barbarians at the Gate.* When Gulfstream continued to founder, he named himself company chairman, slashed costs, and launched a fancy new plane known as the G-V. He also devised a new, more original strategy—seeking out Washington's foreign policy elite as new company directors to help market Gulfstream's jets. Among the luminaries he signed up were Henry Kissinger, George Shultz, Robert Strauss, Donald Rumsfeld, and Colin Powell.

It wasn't difficult to land them. As one of the Republican Party's leading moneymen, Forstmann is a high-profile Washington player. A self-described "champion of free markets and free people," he's most recently been in the news for contributing $50 million for private voucher programs to help inner-city kids attend private schools. He also served as national cochairman of George Bush's failed 1992 reelection campaign and raised a lot of money for the Dole-Kemp ticket in 1996. And he's spent millions bankrolling influential Washington think tanks like the Cato Institute and Empower America, an organization headed by a who's who of current and former Republican Cabinet secretaries and members of Congress—including Gingrich. Forstmann also has friends on the other side of the aisle, including just-resigned Clinton Chief of Staff Erskine Bowles, a longtime pal.

Forstmann used the big-gun directors his connections helped him land to soften up a wide range of bureaucrats, foreign heads of state, and corporate bigwigs and thus "open the door" for the company's sales staff—as Gulfstream spokeswoman Tricia Bergeron puts it. In one instance, Strauss was assigned to help pitch planes to the Japanese government. A former chairman of the Democratic National Committee who served as ambassador to the Soviet Union and to the Russian Federation during the Bush administration, Strauss quickly called his friend Walter Mondale, the U.S. ambassador to Japan at the time, and asked him to lend a hand by putting in a good word for Gulfstream with Japanese officials. Mondale obliged, thus nailing down a five-plane deal worth more than $100 million.

Among Gulfstream's best government clients are those of Kuwait and Saudi Arabia, nations with long-standing relationships with former Secretaries of State Kissinger and Schultz, former Secretary of Defense Rumsfeld, and former Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Powell. Earlier this year, Gulfstream sold three G-Vs worth $115 million to Kuwait Airlines for use by many of the same Kuwaiti government officials that Powell helped liberate from Iraqi occupation as chairman of the Joint Chiefs during the 1991 Gulf war. Pow-

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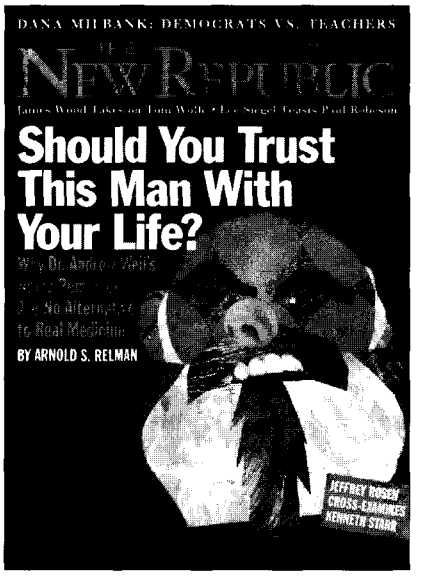

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ell declined through a spokesman to discuss his role in the Kuwaiti deal or his salesmanship on behalf of Gulfstream generally, saying only that he was fond of Gulfstream's "product." Kissinger, Strauss, and Shultz did not return phone calls about Gulfstream.

It's clear, however, that they have helped turn Gulfstream into a highly profitable company. It reported net profits of $243 million last year after being nearly insolvent in 1993. At least 38 foreign governments and 117 Fortune 500 companies now own Gulfstream jets, not to mention the U.S. Air Force, the Federal Aviation Administration, and a host of other federal agencies.

Several months ago, Powell, Kissinger, and Forstmann's other directors got their reward. In lieu of salaries, Forstmann had provided them with thousands of options on Gulfstream stock at prices ranging from roughly $3 per share to $28 per share. Shortly before the stock market began to tank this summer, Forstmann gave his statesmen-salesmen a chance to cash in their options at $43 a share. Kissinger pocketed $876,000 after expenses for five months' work on the Gulfstream board. Strauss and Shultz banked $1.08 million each. Rumsfeld, who also did not return a phone call about Gulfstream, earned $1.09 million, while Powell's share was $1.49 million. (Forstmann has not neglected his other major markets in naming new directors. Michael Ovitz, for instance, has worked the lucrative Hollywood crowd for Forstmann by trading on the myriad relationships he built up as a mega-agent at Creative Artists Agency and then, until recently, as president of Walt Disney. His take in the recent Gulfstream stock deal: $364,000 after expenses for just over a year on the board.)

Making fat sums of money for what in most instances amounted to infrequent phone calls was a strictly no-risk (and perfectly legal) proposition for Forstmann's directors. They didn't avail themselves of their right to buy Gulfstream stock until they were ready to sell the shares. And they didn't even need to come up with the cash to buy those shares. Instead, they were allowed to trade in a portion of their options in exchange for the shares. If the company's stock hadn't risen in value, they simply would not have exercised their options to buy the stock.

Meanwhile, Forstmann and his investment partnership, the New York-based Forstmann, Little & Co., made at least $275 million on that same public offering, on top of the $735 million they made with Gulfstream executives in an initial public offering of Gulfstream stock in 1996. That's fine. In a free-market society, we expect hard-charging capitalists like Forstmann to make tons of money any legal way they can, including by peddling fancy airplanes to foreign potentates with the discreet assistance of U.S. diplomatic missions overseas. But, when it comes to trading on the high offices they once held, you might expect America's famous formers to show a bit more discretion.

THOMAS TOCH is a senior writer at *U.S. News & World Report.*

England's Holocaust loot.

LOOTED

By Itamar Levin

In the early 1950s, Max Hirschfeld, a German Jew who had survived the Theresienstadt camp, requested that the authorities of a European state return the property his brother Herman, who died in Auschwitz, had deposited in that country before the war. After years of correspondence, Hirschfeld received only the watch he and his brother had given their father. Officials at first claimed they couldn't find the rest of the property, worth tens of thousands of dollars. They later claimed that even if it were found it was enemy property and was not to be returned. The fact that the "enemy" died in Auschwitz didn't change a thing.

Those stingy Swiss again? No, this took place in the country that once stood alone against Hitler: Great Britain. Apparently Britain, too, appropriated some Jewish property after the war—both property left without heirs and property for which there were claimants.

The Jewish property concerned came to Britain in the 1920s and '30s—some as part of routine business, some transferred specifically to facilitate new lives when and if the owners immigrated to Britain. It is impossible today to determine the total amount. But most accounts uncovered to date contain thousands or tens of thousands of pounds, and current values are 25 to 30 times what they were at the time of deposit. Even the most conservative estimate places the total at tens of millions of pounds.

When World War II began, the British Board of Trade established the Custodian of Enemy Property Department. This department's job was to seize enemy property in Britain, both government and private, and prevent its use to finance Axis countries' war efforts. At first, the custodian seized German and Italian property. Later, it expanded to German satellites such as Hungary, Bulgaria, Romania, and Japan. In addition, the custodian seized the property of citizens of occupied countries in order to prevent Berlin from claiming ownership.

In all, Britain seized corporate, individual, and state property worth some 350 million pounds, or 8.75 billion pounds in current values. About 30 percent of this belonged to individuals, among them Jews. As long as the war continued, the property was held by the custodian, which didn't touch the property but also did not allow the owners to touch it. After the war, the British government decided that the property should be used

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Is Columbia University compromising its integrity and prestige?

September 23, 1998

Senate Completes Review of CASA

By Kaya Tretjak, Spectator Staff Writer

The University Senate education committee has completed a review of the controversial Center on Addiction and Substance Abuse (CASA) and found the organization is "fulfilling its mission." But some senators and students feel the review did not fully address allegations raised last year that CASA, a Columbia affiliate, uses suspect scientific research to promote an anti-drug political agenda. The Senate has not released its report to the public.

CASA is a non-profit drug research organization that has produced many high-profile reports, including studies on the "gateway drug" theory. At a Senate meeting last semester, concerns were raised that CASA is "an advocacy group whose studies were not based on scientific analysis and were not peer reviewed," according to the minutes of the April 24 meeting.

Is this one more exception to standards of accuracy and decency in the name of The War on Drugs?

Visit Drug War Facts at: www.DrugSense.org

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to compensate Britain. It was clear that Allied property, including occupied countries' property and the property of individuals from Allied or occupied countries, would be returned. But what about property of anyone who lived in former enemy countries?

Peace agreements between Britain and Romania, Hungary, and Bulgaria determined that Britain was entitled to appropriate the property of those countries' citizens who remained in Britain in order to cover claims from British creditors. (The Romanian, Hungarian, and Bulgarian governments promised to compensate citizens whose property was confiscated in this manner, but such a promise from poor Communist states was basically an empty one.)

Notwithstanding the Hirschfeld case, it was generally clear to Britain that not every German, Hungarian, Bulgarian, or Romanian was an "enemy." In 1946, Britain and the rest of the Allies set up rules to enable the release of property of citizens of former enemy countries. The problem was not the regulations but the extremely stringent manner in which Britain implemented them. The main condition was that claimants were required to show that they had suffered "deprivation of liberty" at the hands of the Germans. To Whitehall officials, only those incarcerated in a concentration camp or a recognized prison fit the definition. The World Jewish Congress and the principal Jewish organization in Britain, the Board of Deputies, tried for years to explain that incarceration in labor camps or ghettos constituted deprivation of liberty, as did forced labor without official incarceration. The British said no. Not even former forced laborers at the Auschwitz complex were considered deprived of liberty.

British documents clearly reveal why Britain did this. Officials feared that a wider interpretation of the term "deprivation of liberty" would force them to accept most property claims, which would not leave enough property to compensate British creditors. The fact that this was selfish and illogical apparently didn't bother anyone. None of the hundreds of documents I examined mentions any moral argument.

Another problem was the requirement that property owners reside outside the former country at the time of the claim or prove their intentions to emigrate from that country. This condition prevented many Jews who lived on the other side of the Iron Curtain from receiving their property. Some were even arrested by the Communist authorities for Zionist activity, after being arrested by the Nazis for being Jewish, but even this did not move Whitehall.

To be sure, there were cases in which the deposited property was returned, although only after years of struggle. During that time, the property lost most of its value due to British inflation. The law did require the government to pay 0.75 percent annual interest, but this was not done. In contrast, the custodian often collected a fee of two percent of the value of the property before returning it. And restitution was always defined *ex gratia*, a humiliating and insulting term in and of itself.

Jewish organizations also tried to convince the government to direct unclaimed Holocaust victims' property to war refugees. But Britain refused the request, which would have decreased the sums available for its own citizens. Only in 1956 was it decided to establish a charity fund of 250,000 pounds of leftover German funds, and most of that went to Jewish organizations in the United Kingdom.

I first reported this story in Israel in June 1997. As a result, the British government instructed Foreign Ministry historians to investigate. Their April 1998 report confirmed my findings. Then-Minister of Trade and Industry Margaret Beckett announced that she would allocate two million pounds to further investigate and to decide how to compensate those with well-grounded claims (a term that has yet to be defined).

In July, the government appointed Lord Archer, a senior member of the ruling Labor Party, to examine the report and recommend what to do next. Archer's work is open-ended, and there are still many question marks surrounding the subject. It remains to be seen if the country that led the struggle against Hitler will do justice to the heirs of his victims.

ITAMAR LEVIN is deputy editor of the Israeli financial daily *Globes* and the author of the forthcoming *The Last Deposit* (Prager), concerning Holocaust victims' bank accounts in Switzerland.

CALIFORNIA DISPATCH

GRAY MATTERS

By Peter Schrag

When he takes office in early January, Governor-elect Gray Davis will become not only the first Democrat to lead California in 16 years; he will become the only Democratic governor of any major state. Assuming the Republicans don't find a way to hand the post-2000 reapportionment over to a nonpartisan commission, Davis should be in a position to steer five or six more congressional seats to the Democrats in the next decade.

But Davis means something even more important to the fortunes of the Democratic Party. Once he takes office, he will be the most visible Clinton-era New Democrat in America other than Bill Clinton and Al Gore. In winning the nation's most diverse state—by some 20 points—he managed to carry every ethnic group, all major income groups, and every major

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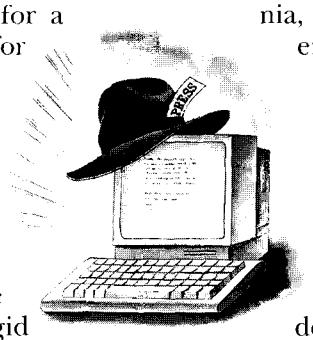
region except one. If Clinton has remade the party from the top down, Davis is about to try to do the same from the bottom up. And, since his strategy for doing that is to govern from the center, that means California is in for four years of leadership that will seek to blunt sharp ideological conflicts—and to finesse, rather than attack, many of the state's most difficult problems.

Granted, Gray Davis does not have Clinton's personality. He won't, as one acquaintance puts it, "play with ideas out loud, [and] he has no compulsive need to be loved." No one calls him warm, charming, or charismatic. Those who are close to him say he is intense, focused, and disciplined. Others say that Davis is opportunistic and calculating.

However he is described, the former chief of staff to Jerry Brown, once known as "Governor Moonbeam," has begun to look like a Clintonian clone—a cautious, poll-conscious politician whose positions fit squarely into the California mainstream: for abortion rights, for the death penalty, tough on environmental regulation. Davis says he's for school reform based on tough standards and the elimination of social promotion, not on "spend[ing] yourself out of a hole"; for a freeze on state college and university fees for middle-income students; for tight fiscal controls and lower taxes. Davis says he will be "death on crime." He's even come out for a constitutional amendment barring flag burning.



Davis will seek better ways to regulate HMOs, but there is no talk about making health care universally available. Nor will he try to undo Proposition 13 or the other rigid tax limits that Californians have written into their constitution over the past 20 years. Davis rarely says the words "poverty" or "welfare." He will not try to radically reform the convoluted governmental structure produced by two decades of ad hoc voter initiatives. While millionaire Al Checchi, who ran against him in last spring's Democratic primary, wanted the state to use its budget surplus to improve public services, Davis wanted to return a chunk to the taxpayers.

It's true that Davis's loyalties—and political debts—are clearly on the traditional Democratic side. In his career—four years as a legislator, four as a lieutenant governor—and particularly in his gubernatorial campaign, he became deeply indebted to labor and public employee unions and is therefore likely to undo the more blatant anti-union measures of his Republican predecessor, Pete Wilson. He will find money for public employee pay raises. He may well agree to modest increases in the state's minimum wage. He will be nice to trial lawyers. And he will be certain to appoint blacks, Hispanics, and Asians to some key jobs.

Nevertheless, Davis will also defy these groups—up to a point. Take the issue of affirmative action. He strongly opposed California's Proposition 209, which prohibits racial preferences in public employment, contracting, and education, when it was on the ballot two years ago. But, even though he had overwhelming support from ethnic minorities in his election campaign, he's also made it clear that he has no intention of trying to repeal the proposition. The voters have spoken, he says, as they have on Proposition 227, passed last June, which is designed to prohibit bilingual education for most California students, and which he also opposed. It is, when you come down to it, a sort of "mend it but don't end it" policy—only this time it's applied to anti-affirmative action measures, not to affirmative action itself.

In the end, Davis will almost certainly look for ways to soften the effects of both initiatives. By the middle of 1999, he will be able to make critical appointments both to the Regents of the University of California, which has been the cockpit of California's battle over affirmative action, and to the state Board of Education, which, pending further legal action, has at least some control over the implementation of Proposition 227.

Davis is on record in favor of what's sometimes called "the four percent solution" to reduce the decline of minority admissions to Berkeley and UCLA, the highly selective flagship campuses of the University of California, that followed the elimination of race preferences in U.C. admissions. Under the proposal, copied from a similar reform in Texas, any student in the top four percent of his or her high school graduating class would automatically be admitted to U.C., regardless of grades or test scores. That, Davis believes, would make clear to students in even the worst high schools that they have a chance, thereby encouraging greater academic effort. (It might, in addition, reduce the tendency toward more high school segregation.)

What it would almost certainly not do is raise the number of blacks or Latinos admitted to Berkeley or to UCLA; it would simply guarantee the top four percent admission to one of the eight U.C. undergraduate campuses, most of which are far less selective. Meanwhile, it might look like an unfair dilution of admissions standards, particularly to parents in suburban schools, hardly something a politician who claims to be for tougher standards would want to be accused of. And, since Republican Ward Connerly, the leader of the Proposition 209 campaign, remains on the U.C. Board of Regents, it may not be something that Davis will pursue too energetically. If Davis and his regents start trying to fudge race preferences, Connerly says, "I'll wrap it around his neck."

Davis's appointees to the state Board of Education will almost certainly try to blunt the anti-bilingual initiative, too, probably by trying to grant district-wide waivers to school systems that want to keep operating broad-scale bilingual programs for limited-English-proficient students—about 25 percent of all California students. Ron Unz, chief sponsor of Proposition 227, maintains that the law doesn't allow such waivers, but the issue rests on a complicated legal point and will be decided by the courts. A lower court has already ruled

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that such waivers may be granted.

Davis's biggest challenge—and his biggest chance to make his mark in national politics—will come in his high-profile school-reform effort. The key question is whether he can manage to raise California's elementary school achievement scores, which, on some measures, are among the lowest in the country. Davis, who wants more school accountability and a crash program in teacher training, is hardly the first governor to discover school reform. In recent years, Wilson and the legislature have put in place a long list of new standards and appropriated more money for books and a wide range of other things. In this year's election, California voters approved $9.2 billion in bonds for school construction and improvements.

But Davis could get lucky. Because California is widely thought to be so far behind in everything, from per-pupil spending to its reading and math scores, any gains associated with the reforms already enacted and the money already appropriated—plus anything new that Davis does—could win him national attention. This, after all, is the state that has one-eighth of the nation's school children and whose majority-minority schools now enroll more Hispanics than Anglo whites. Whatever recent successes Governor Zell Miller might have had in Georgia, or Tommy Thompson in Wisconsin, or even George W. Bush in Texas, will pale by comparison. Conversely, if Davis fails, it could generate a voucher movement that might roar out of California with as much ferocity as the Proposition 13 tax revolt did 20 years ago.

Davis, unlike Brown and most of his other predecessors in Sacramento, may resist national ambitions for a while. But there's no getting around the fact that he has just won the largest state in the Union by a margin of 20 points—and he's a famously relentless and effective fund-raiser. He will turn 56 just before his inauguration; prime time for national politics. And, while he himself acknowledges that he's boring, that puts him squarely in the stolid Gore tradition. In any case, as governor of a state that for sheer size alone is the most important in American politics, Davis is now the most important Democrat outside of Washington—and he will put Clintonian liberalism to one of its toughest tests yet.

PETER SCHRAG is the author of *Paradise Lost: California's Experience, America's Future* (The New Press).

Why we're doing exactly what he wants.

SADDAM'S TRAP

By Scott Ritter

Sometime in the second week of December, inspectors from the United Nations Special Commission (UNSCOM) will once again assemble in Iraq to carry out surprise inspections of so-called "sensitive sites." These are locations that Iraq claims are related to its national security, dignity, and sovereignty, but that the inspectors believe house documents and other material related to Iraq's production of weapons of mass destruction. Unfettered access to such sites is critical not only for verifying Iraq's compliance with its Security Council-mandated disarmament obligations but also for the conduct of any meaningful long-term monitoring of Iraqi compliance once such disarmament has been achieved. As such, the coming inspections are not only a critical "test" of Iraqi compliance with its recent decision to resume cooperation with UNSCOM in the face of U.S. air strikes, but also a defining moment for the future of UNSCOM and all multilateral disarmament efforts.

Yet, in a real sense, this exercise is a sham that will almost certainly play right into Saddam Hussein's hands. Since Saddam has blocked the inspectors from conducting any meaningful information-gathering for the past four months, the targets of their "surprise" inspections will most likely be drawn from a list of suspicious sites dating to last summer. Today, surely, those facilities will be empty, their contents having been moved to secret locations elsewhere. In effect, Saddam will have managed to have his cake and eat it too. He will have prevented the inspectors from gathering any real evidence against him, while at the same time appearing to give them unfettered access to sensitive sites.

As a member of UNSCOM since 1991, and its chief inspector responsible for investigating Iraq's concealment mechanism from July 1995 until my resignation on August 26, 1998, I know that this is hardly the first time

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Saddam has pulled such tricks. In fact, they are at the heart of his strategy for preserving his arsenal of weapons of mass destruction and, eventually, getting rid of U.N. economic sanctions (which he has largely succeeded in eluding anyway). Through skillful manipulation of the situation on the ground in Iraq, international public opinion, and rifts among the members of the Security Council, Saddam actually aims to cap his comeback by getting UNSCOM to issue a clean bill of health. It is an audacious plan, but it may succeed, thanks in no small part to the mistakes of U.S. policymakers themselves.

If it succeeds, the consequences could be dire. The Baghdad regime—strengthened by having retained the capability to produce weapons of mass destruction and psychologically fortified by having outlasted the world's sole remaining superpower—will rapidly restore its internal and regional constituencies and reemerge as a force to be reckoned with. Since his defeat in the Gulf war, Saddam has built up eight years' worth of resentment and frustration that can only be released through renewed efforts at territorial expansion through armed aggression and blackmail, both economic and military.

Even today, Iraq is not nearly disarmed. UNSCOM lacks a full declaration from Iraq concerning its prohibited capabilities, making any absolute pronouncement about the extent of Iraq's retained proscribed arsenal inherently tentative. But, based on highly credible intelligence, UNSCOM suspects that Iraq still has biological agents like anthrax, botulinum toxin, and clostridium perfringens in sufficient quantity to fill several dozen bombs and ballistic missile warheads, as well as the means to continue manufacturing these deadly agents. Iraq probably retains several tons of the highly toxic VX substance, as well as sarin nerve gas and mustard gas. This agent is stored in artillery shells, bombs, and ballistic missile warheads. And Iraq retains significant dual-use industrial infrastructure that can be used to rapidly reconstitute large-scale chemical weapons production.

Meanwhile, Iraq has kept its entire nuclear weapons infrastructure intact through dual-use companies that allow the nuclear-design teams to conduct vital research and practical work on related technologies and materials. Iraq still has components (high explosive lenses, initiators, and neutron generators) for up to four nuclear devices minus the fissile core (highly enriched uranium or plutonium), as well as the means to produce these. Iraq has retained an operational long-range ballistic missile force that includes approximately four mobile launchers and a dozen missiles. And, under the guise of a permitted short-range missile program, Iraq has developed the technology and production means necessary for the rapid reconstitution of long-range ballistic missile production.

Iraq supports its retained prohibited capabilities with an extensive covert procurement network operated by Iraqi intelligence. While images of starving Iraqi children are beamed around the world by American television, Iraqi front companies have spent millions of dollars on forbidden material related to all weapons categories—in direct violation of existing sanctions and often under the cover of the humanitarian "oil for food" program.

Finally, Iraqi security forces have kept critical documentation, including the vital "cookbooks" that contain the step-by-step process to make chemical agent, outline the procedures for producing weapons-grade biological agent, detail the final design of the Iraqi nuclear weapon, and provide the mechanical integration procedures for long-range ballistic missiles.

These capabilities may seem paltry compared with what Iraq had before the Gulf war. But they represent a vital "seed stock" that can and will be used by Saddam Hussein to reconstitute his former arsenal. His strategy for doing so has emerged over the past seven years of struggle with UNSCOM. That struggle began almost as soon as the commission was created to verify a declaration Iraq was supposed to provide to the Security Council 15 days after the end of the Gulf war. A Security Council resolution required Iraq to set forth the totality of its proscribed arsenal, as well as all its components and the means of producing it. But, instead of telling the truth, Iraq gave a radically misleading and incomplete account. UNSCOM's original mandate, a seemingly simple exercise in conventional arms control verification, evolved into an endless game of cat and mouse.

One by one, we managed to tear down Iraq's lies, the biggest of which was its March 1992 claim that it had destroyed all of its proscribed weapons and capabilities unilaterally, without international supervision. Iraq maintained it somehow undertook this considerable task without keeping any records to verify it. Iraq also expected us to accept this disarmament by declaration at face value. But, for more than six years, we refused to do so, reworking the available evidence until we had exposed the failed logic of that claim and almost every other one the Iraqis made.

Unfortunately, we received precious little support. Every six months, UNSCOM's executive chairman, first Rolf Ekeus and then Richard Butler, would report our findings to the Security Council. But, instead of reaching the obvious conclusion that Iraq was violating its obligations to the council, the council kept sending us back to obtain even more specific evidence. For instance, one of Iraq's false claims was that it had never had a biological weapons program. However, we were able to find shipping invoices showing that Iraq had received several dozen tons of growth material used for biological products that Iraq could not account for. It seemed pretty damning—but not damning enough for the Security Council, which encouraged us to find evidence of the biological weapons program itself. When, after considerable effort, we were able to do so, Iraq conceded that it had indeed once had such a program but claimed that the program was no longer active. Once again, rather than finding Iraq in noncompliance, the Security Council essentially directed us to disprove this latest lie.

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Eventually we realized that this game could go on indefinitely. And so by 1995 we shifted the focus of our investigation to finding direct evidence not of Iraq's weapons programs themselves but of the fact that Iraq was deliberately concealing them from us. For this we needed documents: documents setting out the production records of the secret facilities and weapons dismantled by Iraq and hidden away, documents about the alleged unilateral destruction, documents setting forth the methods used by Iraq to conceal its weapons and capabilities from the inspection teams. And, if Iraq did not want to provide these documents willingly, then we would have to ferret them out.

Beginning in 1994, we sat for hours listening to high-level Iraqi defectors describe relevant Iraqi documents—who wrote them, who they were distributed to, how they were stored, how they were hidden. We confirmed much of this information through a carefully constructed international intelligence support network. But when we went into Iraq to find these documents we were stopped at gunpoint. We watched helplessly as Iraqi security forces shuttled records from one site to another, with sedans leaving known document-storage sites for sanctuary in so-called "presidential facilities." Over and over again our inspection teams were confronted with empty shelves and missing file folders. But we persisted. Finally, Iraq decided to take more drastic action.

In January of this year, we embarked on an effort to expose Iraq's use of biological and chemical agents on live human test subjects. (This effort had two goals: First, to find evidence of the program itself, and, second, to force Iraq to try to conceal this evidence—a campaign that we, in turn, would attempt to document.) We had received credible intelligence that 95 political prisoners had been transferred from the Abu Ghraib Prison to a site in western Iraq, where they had been subjected to lethal testing under the supervision of a special unit from the Military Industrial Commission, under Saddam's personal authority. But, just as we began moving in on facilities housing documents that would support our contention (for instance, transfer records of the prisoners), Iraq woke up to the danger and ceased all cooperation with us.

Iraq's official justification for doing so was that the United States and Britain were dominating the inspection process. Later Iraq added the complaint that we were seeking to inspect sites vital to its sovereignty and national security, including so-called "presidential sites." As it had during a previous episode of Iraqi intransigence several months earlier, the United States threatened military action. But at the last minute U.N. Secretary-General Kofi Annan averted war by brokering a compromise solution embodied in the Memorandum of Understanding of February 23.

This memorandum indeed forestalled the conflict, but it failed to resolve any of the underlying issues. Instead, it created a two-way trap. On the one hand, it boxed the Iraqis in, committing them to provide us with unfettered access to all sites. But it also backed the United States into an apparent guarantee of military action in the event that Iraq failed to comply. The only way forward was total Iraqi compliance.

Or so it seemed. By the time we returned to Iraq on March 5, Saddam had shuffled his documents and material into new hidden locations, challenging us to a fresh game of hide-and-seek. The secretary-general, the Security Council, and the United States all urged us to conduct a quick test of Iraq's compliance, so, later that month, we dispatched a team of inspectors to Iraq. And Iraq, in accordance with Kofi Annan's agreement, allowed us into facilities that had previously been off-limits. But, naturally, Iraq had carefully purged the sites of any incriminating evidence. And so we dutifully inspected these sanitized facilities, establishing the precedent of unfettered access but finding nothing related to weapons-making.

Fortunately, we also had a secret up our sleeves. For nearly a year, we had been developing information on the man in charge of Iraq's concealment effort: Saddam Hussein's presidential secretary, Abid Hamid Mahmoud, who is considered by many to be one of the most powerful men in Iraq, perhaps second only to Saddam himself. Senior defectors had long talked about the immense secrets kept under Mahmoud's personal protection. But his proximity to Saddam had kept us at bay. In March we finally achieved the breakthrough we had been looking for: evidence that Mahmoud had directed elements of Saddam's bodyguards, the Special Security Organization, to remove documents from facilities to be inspected. Now we finally had the information we needed to act.

We returned to New York in April and began planning surprise inspections of Mahmoud's document-hiding sites. But our efforts were cut short by objections from a most unusual source: the United States. Without warning, the United States withheld intelligence support central to this line of investigation. What's more, it prevented more than half of the members of my team from rejoining me in New York (by reassigning U.S. officials on the team and putting pressure on the governments of other team members to prohibit them from coming to New York). The investigative capabilities that UNSCOM had so carefully constructed since 1996 were wiped out.

Why did the United States respond this way? It turns out the Clinton administration wanted UNSCOM to verify Iraqi compliance with Security Council resolutions—but only up to a point. The U.S.'s primary policy goal in the Persian Gulf had become the containment of Iraq through the maintenance of international sanctions—not necessarily the disarmament of Iraq. Thus, for all its ostensible support of UNSCOM, the administration was not willing to go to war in order to ensure UNSCOM the access it needed to fully disarm Iraq. And Clinton's national security team worried that there was no quicker way to provoke a new crisis that would undermine international support for sanctions than through an UNSCOM effort to inspect Mahmoud's inner sanctum. And so the

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inspection regime was reduced to merely carrying out the illusion of arms control.

But Saddam was not about to let himself be contained any more than he was going to allow Iraq to be inspected. Taking advantage of the reluctance to support intrusive surprise inspections (the United States had directly intervened to stop UNSCOM from carrying out such inspections on at least six occasions since November 1996, the most recent being in August 1998), Saddam marshaled his allies in the Security Council—Russia, France, and China—and in the Office of the Secretary-General to change the subject from his refusal to come clean to whether the inspection process was fair. This further isolated those of us on the inspection team, creating an underlying sense at the United Nations that we were somehow to blame for the crises with Iraq.

Meanwhile, Iraqi diplomats doggedly tried to split the requirements of verification from the technical practicalities of on-site inspection. In at least seven separate technical forums conducted by UNSCOM since January 1998, Iraq had failed to convince even its allies in Russia, France, and China that it had complied with its disarmament obligations. So Iraq sought to shift the compliance debate away from such matters into the political arena, where Iraq had more flexibility to maneuver given the admission by the secretary-general and the executive chairman of UNSCOM that 100 percent disarmament might never be accomplished. In effect, Iraq was seeking a political resolution to the issue of compliance, one that would undermine UNSCOM's role. The confused policies of the United States vis-à-vis UNSCOM inspections only made Iraq's efforts easier.

By August of this year, the United States was fully committed to a policy—albeit unstated—of containing Iraq through economic sanctions and a large military presence in the Gulf, while avoiding expensive, debilitating confrontations between UNSCOM and Saddam. This entailed suppressing the efforts of our inspection team to root out all the facts. (It was for this reason that I resigned—reasoning that it was better to have no inspections process at all than a sham process conferring approval upon Iraq when it deserved anything but.)

It was at this point that Saddam pressed his advantage—and once again ceased cooperating with UNSCOM. Iraq's extreme actions were clearly unsupportable even to its allies, and the United States, while keeping its rhetoric to a minimum, took the opportunity to gain international backing for its policy of isolation and containment. The United States gamely allowed the Security Council to deliberate for more than a month before passing a resolution condemning Iraq's actions, then proclaimed victory, on the assumption that Iraq was now more isolated than ever.

In fact, the United States had played right into Saddam's hands. In a concession to France, Russia, and China, the United States didn't object to the invitation by the Security Council to the secretary-general to participate in its proceedings. And Kofi Annan proved to be no mute witness. He proposed a "comprehensive review" of Iraq's outstanding disarmament obligations, a process which shifted the burden of proof from Iraq—where it belonged—to UNSCOM, which would now be required to define Iraq's level of noncompliance and then back these assertions with facts, including the sources and methods used to establish those facts. Iraq's allies on the council concurred. The United States, eager to preserve the appearance of consensus, acquiesced.

The story behind the "comprehensive review" concept is an interesting one, too. Its origins lie in the aftermath of Annan's triumphal February Memorandum of Understanding. Seeking to consolidate his diplomatic victory, Annan appointed a special representative of the secretary-general to Iraq. The role of the special representative was ostensibly to monitor the situation in Baghdad and attempt to mediate any disputes between our inspection team and Iraq before they developed into full-fledged crises. In fact, he was to be Kofi Annan's man on the ground in Baghdad—to keep an eye on UNSCOM.

Annan chose his man carefully, pulling out of retirement Prakash Shah—an Indian diplomat who was appealing to the Iraqis both because he wasn't from an "Anglo-Saxon" country and because he evinced general sympathy for the plight of a Third World power standing up to the United States. Soon after the February agreement, we found ourselves at odds with the Iraqis over the removal from Iraq of ballistic missile warhead fragments that we wanted to have tested for the presence of chemical and/or biological agent. The Iraqis objected, claiming that the warheads only contained isopropyl alcohol and that we were looking for an excuse to lengthen the inspection process and keep sanctions on Iraq.

Iraq appealed to Prakash Shah, who immediately contacted UNSCOM's chairman, Richard Butler. It didn't matter to Prakash Shah that UNSCOM had every right under the relevant Security Council resolutions to remove these fragments and test them. It didn't matter that, given the Iraqi history of unilateral destruction, fabricated evidence, and withheld documentation, these warhead fragments offered the only means of verification available to UNSCOM. What did matter, according to Prakash Shah, was that the secretary-general's Memorandum of Understanding be protected in every way. As Butler relayed to me at the time, Prakash Shah had told him: "There must be peace at any cost." In the end, Shah and Annan pressured Butler to accept a compromise solution that placed a 30-day time limit on testing these materials, although UNSCOM experts contended that up to three months might be required.

When UNSCOM tested the fragments, we found irrefutable evidence that the warheads had been filled with both VX nerve agent and anthrax biological agent, directly contradicting earlier Iraqi claims. Still, Prakash Shah continued to maintain close contact with the Iraqi deputy prime minister, Tariq Aziz, and other senior Iraqi officials, not to push for their unconditional compliance with Security Council resolutions, but rather to lend a sympathetic ear to their complaints about the sins that

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we inspectors had supposedly committed and to converse about how the secretary-general and the Security Council could be mobilized to rein in UNSCOM and get the earliest possible relief of sanctions for Iraq.

As the summer of 1998 wore on and Iraq continued to fail every logical, technical, and scientific test of compliance, it became increasingly clear to Prakash Shah and Kofi Annan that the only possible solution to this problem was political. It was at this point that they hit upon the idea of the "comprehensive review," which would, of course, be a political process divorced from the messy facts and reality of UNSCOM's technical work. Iraq, naturally, was delighted—seeing the idea as a way of putting UNSCOM on trial and, as such, a potential shortcut toward the lifting of economic sanctions.

By the end of September, all that was required was a face-saving means of getting the weapons inspectors back into Iraq in order to set the process in motion. On October 31, in a dramatic move that caught even its supporters on the Security Council by surprise, Iraq terminated all relations with UNSCOM and its chief, Richard Butler. Saddam Hussein timed his move well. One day prior to Iraq's precipitous announcement, the Security Council had issued verbal assurances for active engagement toward the early lifting of sanctions once Iraq reversed its decision and allowed the inspectors back to work. Iraq pocketed this promise, and struck.

Shocked into silence, the world stood by mutely as the United States clumsily mobilized for war. No matter how undesirable, war appeared inevitable. And then, at the eleventh hour, Saddam played his hand. He backed down, as any rational leader faced with overwhelming force would do. Relieved, the diplomats of the world rushed in and declared an end to the crisis. Stunned, the United States had no choice but to stand down and declare itself the winner.

But the only winner was Saddam Hussein. In wrestling terms, Saddam had executed a flawless reverse. It was the United States that now found itself boxed in. It had no choice but to support the return of the UNSCOM inspectors and—since basic decorum will prevent the United States from conducting any military action against Iraq during the upcoming Muslim holy month of Ramadan—to urge the inspectors to conduct a quick "test" of Iraq's compliance. But once again the inspectors' information on target sites has become hopelessly outdated (Iraq having had four months to shuffle its materials to new hiding places). Thus the inspectors will be forced to declare whatever sites they inspect "clean." And, once Iraq has established a record of compliance with these now meaningless surprise inspections, the comprehensive review process can begin.

So what is the correct policy to pursue regarding Iraq? The Security Council and the United States have several options. The first, which is the favored option of Iraq and its supporters in France, Russia, China, and the Office of the Secretary-General, recognizes that Iraq cannot hope to have economic sanctions lifted without a certification from UNSCOM that it has complied with its disarmament obligations. This option therefore would restructure UNSCOM organizationally and operationally so that it would promptly give Iraq a clean bill of health despite Iraq's current dangerously incomplete level of disarmament. And then Iraq would be free to rearm even more rapidly, perhaps with the help of French, Russian, and Chinese companies.

A second option, similar to the de facto strategy pursued by the United States and the United Kingdom from April through October of this year, is to allow the continuation of a weakened UNSCOM, which, although unable to effectively carry out its disarmament mandate inside Iraq, would also not certify Iraq's disarmament. The hope would be for indefinite containment of Iraq. This option is fraught with problems—among them the lack of international support for keeping the ever-leakier sanctions in place indefinitely as well as Saddam's demonstrated unwillingness to allow UNSCOM to operate unless he knows that he is going to get a clean bill of health.

A third option, one that nearly came about during the most recent face-off this November, is to accept the demise of the UNSCOM inspection regime and seek to punish Iraq through massive air strikes while continuing to contain Iraq through sanctions. But punishing Iraq without supporting the continued work of UNSCOM would only further isolate the United States. (Another version of this option would be massive military intervention, including the employment of ground forces, for the purpose of overthrowing Saddam. But there currently appears to be little support, at home or abroad, for this kind of action.)

There is, however, a fourth option. Iraq's disarmament obligations are set forth in a Chapter VII Security Council resolution, which mandates Iraq's compliance and authorizes the use of military force to compel it. UNSCOM is the organization designated for overseeing Iraq's disarmament and verifying Iraq's long-term compliance. Thus, UNSCOM alone holds the key to unlocking the Iraqi disarmament issue. There is no endgame without UNSCOM.

Iraq knows this, which is the underlying reason for its continued policy of confrontation and concession. Since 1991, each face-off with Iraq has left UNSCOM weakened as its rights and capabilities are whittled away. Iraq is in the final phase of its plan to reconstitute UNSCOM to its liking. The United States and the Security Council should not allow this to happen. The world should demand a robust inspection regime and total Iraqi compliance. If Iraq refuses to allow this, or if it is unduly obstructive, then the United States and the Security Council should seek to compel Iraq, through military force if necessary. Military strikes carried out for the purpose of enabling a vigorous UNSCOM to carry out its mandate are wholly justifiable. And one thing is certain: Without an UNSCOM carrying out the full range of its disarmament and monitoring activities unfettered by Iraqi obstruction, the only winner to emerge from this situation will be Saddam Hussein. •

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Post-authoritarian shock in the South.

THE SECRETS OF MISSISSIPPI

By Peter Maass

JACKSON

Jesse Morris walks past a Civil War memorial that casts a long shadow in front of the Mississippi Department of Archives and History. He enters the bunker-like building and passes into a quiet, book-lined library on the ground floor, and he sits down in front of a Hewlett Packard computer. It is one of two PCs with hard drives containing scanned copies of the files of the State Sovereignty Commission. Morris, a civil rights activist in the 1960s, is trying to figure out who betrayed him.

The twelve members of the Sovereignty Commission, created by the state legislature in 1956, included the governor, lieutenant governor, and several legislators. The commission was intended to prevent outsiders from changing Mississippi's Southern—segregationist—way of life. It was supposed to do this by publicizing how well segregation worked and by secretly keeping watch over those who wished to overturn the system. By the time it closed in 1973, the commission's investigators had amassed confidential files on 87,000 people, making it the largest state-level spying effort in U.S. history. This past March, after a court struggle lasting longer than the civil rights movement itself, more than 124,000 pages of the commission's work were released to the public.

I peer over Jesse Morris's shoulder as he clicks through the archives. His file contains more than 100 documents. By the standards of the Sovereignty Commission, it is a modestly sized dossier. Investigators' reports are in the form of memos, often on commission letterhead; but reports from informants are usually on plain paper, and the only indication of the author's identity is a code name scribbled at the top. Most reports filed on Morris were from "Agent X," who was secretly paid as much as $500 per month by the commission—big money in Mississippi in those days. "The writer was in conversation with Jessie [sic] Morris," a February 5, 1965, memo from Agent X begins. "He plans to go to Holmes County over this weekend and will return Monday. He left Jackson with two white girls, driving a 1964 white Pontiac bearing 1965 Georgia license 1-J10783. He stated that they were having some sort of difficulty with a Community Center in Holmes County and he was going to work with them over the weekend."

Morris thinks he can identify those who informed on him and his friends. It's a matter of pinpointing meetings attended by the informers or conversations they were involved in, and then figuring out who was present and who among those present might have been the spy. Even before the formal release of the files in March, many documents were leaked to the press. Because of this, the identity of Agent X has been suspected for some time. Reading his own file, Morris has no doubt that the rumors are true—Agent X was his best friend, a fellow black Mississippian named R.L. Bolden.

Morris is hardly the only person in Mississippi to have found a disquieting revelation in the commission's files. The release of the documents has held up a mirror to Mississippi, and the mirror shows an ugly reflection from more than 30 years ago. It is the ugliness of informers, of friends ratting on friends, the ugliness of blackmail and a secret spy agency that did as it pleased. Although it is no secret that the Mississippi of three or four decades ago could be a dangerous place for anyone who deviated from the segregationist norm, the opening of the files illustrates the quasi-totalitarian nature of the state government. Thus, it highlights an often-overlooked fact: the struggle for integration in Mississippi was not just a struggle against racism or a struggle for the rights of one oppressed race. It was a struggle for democracy.

Consider this description of a dictatorial state: "[A] never-ceasing propagation of the 'true faith' must go on relentlessly, with a constantly reiterated demand for loyalty to the united front, requiring that non-conformists and dissenters from the code be silenced, or, in a crisis, driven from the community. Violence and the threat of violence have confirmed and enforced the image of unanimity." This is not an essay by George Orwell or Vaclav Havel but a passage from *Mississippi: The Closed Society,* by University of Mississippi history professor James W. Silver. Published in 1963, the book was widely read, particularly at the Sovereignty Commission, which had Silver under surveillance. Indeed, Silver was one of many whites—not all of whom were necessarily liberals—who were spied upon along with blacks. It's no accident that Mississippi's leaders called their spy

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agency the "State Sovereignty Commission" rather than the "State Segregation Commission." For them, political repression and state sovereignty were inseparable.

If you think that overstates the case, just listen to Horace Harned Jr. recall the good old days, when schools were segregated and blacks could not vote. I met Harned and his wife, Nellie, over a friendly lunch of corn bread, chicken pot pie, and banana pudding in the kitchen of their Starkville farmhouse. "We were riding a high tide until the Supreme Court came along," he said, his face creased with the wistful smile of a still-proud segregationist. "I was on what you would call the gold team. About a dozen members of the legislature pretty much ran the state." As one of them, Harned held a seat on the State Sovereignty Commission.

Like a veteran retelling a battle, Harned defends the commission's work. The government in Washington wanted a direct hand in running things, he says. Civil rights workers were infiltrating the state, stirring up trouble. Mississippi faced a threat to its sovereignty. "All that bunch, Jesse Jackson and Martin Luther King and the whole crowd, they got their orders and their money from the Communist Party," Harned explains. "The Communists made war down here on us.... They chose Mississippi because they figured if they could break Mississippi everything else would come easily." Resistance was necessary: "We were fighting to preserve the rights of states, and we were trying to preserve a stable political system."

But even Harned was surprised when the commission's files were thrown open. It turns out *he* had a file, too. There's nothing too embarrassing in it, aside from correspondence about his request for a probe of efforts to integrate a Baptist church in Starkville. The thought of the commission keeping track of one of its own members makes him laugh so hard his eyes brim with tears of mirth. "I was one of the eighty-eight thousand! We were right serious about it, weren't we?"

Indeed they were. And so, like the nations of the former Soviet bloc, like South Africa and Argentina and Chile, and unlike any other state in the United States, Mississippi—for all the enormous progress it has made—still bears certain hallmarks of a post-authoritarian society, caught between the urge to remember, the desire for justice, and the need to move on. So far, retrospective justice has been slow in coming. It wasn't until this year that Klan leader Sam Bowers, now 73, was convicted, in his fifth trial, for the 1966 firebomb murder of civil rights activist Vernon Dahmer. And the state Senate recently voted *down* a proposed $1.5 million fund to compensate the families of victims of lynching and other racially motivated crimes going back to the 1930s. Outside the legislature, there is talk, but only talk, of setting up a South Africa-style truth commission.

Meanwhile, the commission files have touched off a new discussion eerily parallel to those that have taken place in post-Communist Eastern Europe. Who are the paid state snitches in these files—Agent X, Agent Y, Agent Z, Agent Zero? What should be done about them? What should be done about people who were not informers but had ambiguous, give-and-take relationships with commission investigators? And can the accuracy of these files even be assured? Might the commission be reaching out from its grave and smearing civil rights activists once more? In truth, should the files have been released at all?

The fact that the commission felt it necessary to track one of its own suggests that, as spy agencies go, Mississippi's was cut from the same paranoid cloth as its counterparts in the former Soviet bloc. But it's important not to overstate the comparison. By 1989, its final year of operation, East Germany's Stasi possessed 110,000 regular informers, and its staff exceeded 90,000. Most of the time, the Sovereignty Commission had three full-time investigators and farmed out the rest of its work to private eyes. The number of informers, though hard to pin down because documents are believed to have been destroyed, probably didn't exceed a few hundred over the life of the commission.

The commission was also amateurish. One report, often cited in the media because it leaked out several years ago and is so wonderfully absurd, describes how an investigator descended upon a white woman who had just given birth to an out-of-wedlock baby. His assignment: to find out whether the rumors were true that the father was black. His strategy: examine the baby's skin color and finger shape. His conclusion (reached with the local sheriff who accompanied him to the baby's crib): "We both agreed we were not qualified to say it was a part Negro child, but we could say it was not 100 percent Caucasian."

According to its files, the commission also made only very limited use of hidden microphones—in contrast to, for instance, the FBI's extensive surveillance of Martin Luther King. And its agents did not murder or assault; this was left to the Klan and local police forces. It did not use wiretaps. It did not, apparently, open mail. It did not, like East Germany's obsessive Stasi, collect samples of individual scents and seal them in jars in the event a dissident's odor would be needed by bloodhounds for tracking purposes.

Much of what the commission amassed is trivial, absurd. It kept files on Elvis Presley (an investigator reporting about a concert where Presley was expected to perform wrote that, though Presley failed to show, "hippies ... were observed laying [sic] around in the grass and doing everything imaginable"); Groucho Marx (because his name appeared on a right-wing group's list of the "most rabid REDS and Fellow-Travelers"); Muhammad Ali (an investigator noted Ali told a crowd in Jackson to support George Wallace for president "because Wallace came out and told everybody that he was the Devil"); and even former White House operative Harold Ickes Jr. (the commission filched a copy of his application for civil rights work in Mississippi; under the heading of job history, Ickes, then a senior at Stanford University, wrote, "1957–1959—working on California,

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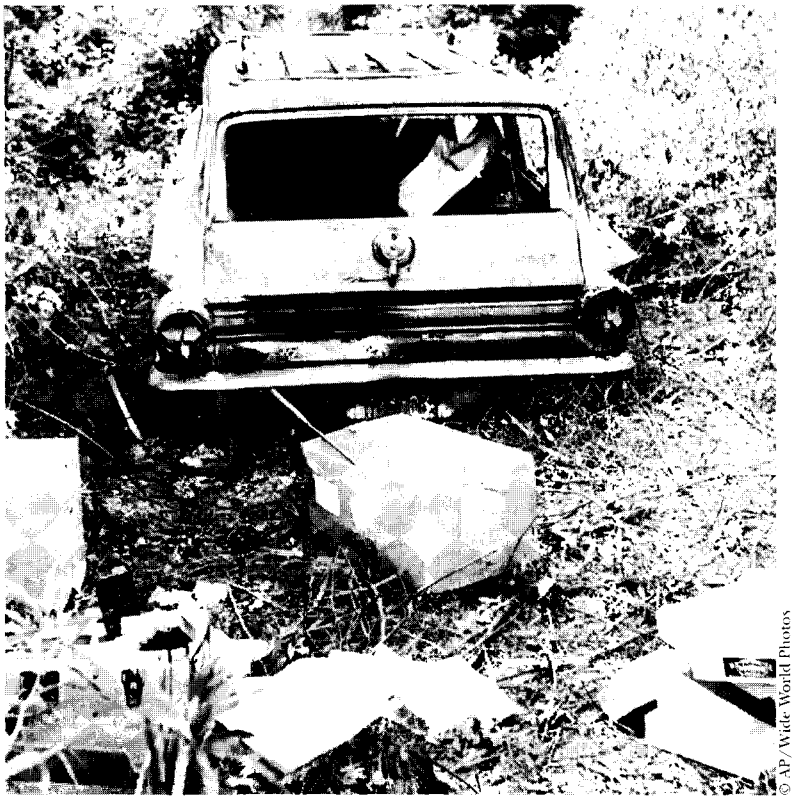
Nevada cattle ranches; 1960—jackhammer operator for road-construction company").

The State Sovereignty Commission thus illustrates the principle that, by trying to know everything, spy agencies often end up learning nothing. Czech President Vaclav Havel has suggested that dissidents should ignore surveillance by secret police—that way, spy agencies accumulate warehouses of often trivial and even erroneous information and, at some point, choke on it all. Take one of the memos on Jesse Morris written by Agent X. I have deleted the name of a civil rights activist mentioned in the memo because the information about him is of a personal nature and, whether true or not, does not merit publication. "Jessie [sic] Morris has gotten orders from Jim Foreman to proceed to Canton to straighten out [another activist]," wrote Agent X. "It appears that [the activist] has been drinking a lot lately and playing around with the girls up there in Canton. [The activist] has not been paying any attention to his duties. Morris is to take care of this problem." Morris just shook his head and smiled when he read that. The notion that he had been tasked to "straighten out" the activist in question is absurd, he says, because Morris, a senior official in the Council of Federated Organizations, did not work with the activist who had the alleged alcohol and womanizing problems; Morris had no authority over him. Another error—the commission misspells Morris's first name.



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THE BURNED STATION WAGON OF THREE MURDERED CIVIL RIGHTS WORKERS, FOUND NEAR PHILADELPHIA, MISSISSIPPI, ON JUNE 24, 1964

The errors in the commission's files are about more than mere details, says Rims Barber, a white lawyer who was active in the civil rights movement: "The files reveal ... the mindset of the keepers of the files.... Their prism was that anyone white who was involved must be a leader, and therefore we must watch them." As a result, he says, "they didn't know what was going on. They missed it. They didn't know who the leaders were because there are more mentions of me than there are of [black activist] Henry Kirksey, and that's just plain wrong. They were looking in the wrong places."

This is not to say that the commission didn't manage to do plenty of damage. Quite the contrary. In addition to gathering information, the commission liked to play its own game of naming names. "Our investigations indicate that three of your employees are very active in the NAACP and another employee is suspected of similar work," states a June 22, 1964, letter from the commission director to the personnel manager of the Jackson Tile Company. "It is our policy to advise employers of such activities on the part of their personnel and then leave it to the employers as to whether they will take any steps to have such activity curtailed." The letter names the employees, who probably did not remain employees much longer. I also came across a letter in the files from the director of the commission to the president of Mississippi Southern University, advising him to blackmail a black youth who wished to break the university's color barrier—by threatening to brand the student as a homosexual.

And there is information in the files that links the commission to some of the most notorious crimes committed in the civil rights era. In 1964, Agent X provided the commission with the license plate number of a Ford station wagon that belonged to the Congress of Racial Equality (CORE); the commission routinely forwarded such information to local police officials, who either passed it to members of the Klan or were Klan members themselves. Months later, police pulled over civil rights workers Michael Schwerner, James Chaney, and Andrew Goodman in that CORE station wagon. The trio were killed that night by members of the Klan. (A federal jury later convicted Bowers, Cecil Price, and five other defendants of depriving Schwerner, Chaney, and Goodman of their civil rights; to this day, there have been no murder convictions in the case.) There has been more success in getting a murder conviction in the 1963 slaying of Medgar Evers, shot in the driveway of his home. In 1994, after leaked commission files showed that the commission had screened jurors in an earlier trial, Byron De La Beckwith, a Klan member, was convicted of the Evers murder.

But perhaps the commission's most painful, and enduring, legacy is the extent to which it has divided the civil rights community against itself—sowing the seeds of suspicion and betrayal.

Morris can still remember the day in 1964 when Bolden was brought into the heart of the movement.

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There was a meeting at the Masonic Temple, and Bolden, relatively unknown, got into an argument with Charles Evers, who had taken the helm of Mississippi's NAACP chapter after his brother, Medgar, was slain. Charles Evers was not nearly as respected as his late brother, and people at the meeting were impressed that Bolden stood up to him. Bolden was brought back to the office that housed the Council of Federated Organizations, where Morris met him for the first time. Bolden, who had a brown Cadillac, became Morris's driver, ferrying him across town and across state and sharing the sort of camaraderie of soldiers in the same foxhole. Eventually Bolden became vice president of the Mississippi NAACP.

Since coming to believe that Bolden had been informing on him all that time, Morris hasn't bothered to confront him. "What can I say to him?" Morris asks. "I just feel betrayed.... We were so close that I'm surprised people don't think I'm a spy. People ask me, 'Jesse, how couldn't you know?'" Morris mentions that Bolden is retired now. Jackson is not a big city, so Morris has seen Bolden on occasion but hasn't said more than hello. "There are some people who would like to take a gun to his head, but nobody is going to do that," Morris says. "Nobody wants to go to jail for killing the skunk. So, in that sense, he's home free."

Bolden doesn't bother to mount much of a defense. Because few informers have been unmasked, and because there do not appear to be many informers as close to the heart of the movement as Bolden was, his name has become a synonym for betrayal. "I don't want to discuss this thing because everyone I've talked to has distorted what I said," he told me during a brief phone interview. "People can say what they want; but they're wrong, and they can go to hell. I don't want to deal with it."

Charles Evers nearly exploded when I mentioned Bolden. "He's a low-down, no-good son of a bitch," Evers said. "He sucked up to us, and he was deceiving us; he's nothing but a traitor. I have no respect for him whatsoever. If he dropped dead today it wouldn't be too soon for me." Ironically, some people say the same about Evers. Despite his high-profile work during the civil rights era, and despite his slain brother's martyr status, Evers faces accusations of having been in league with the Sovereignty Commission.

Evers has a long file, more than 1,000 pages. It attests to a double relationship. The commission's investigators were keeping a close watch on him, listening to his speeches, tracking his movements, and collecting gossip about his girlfriends and his controversial reputation in the black community. The files also contain reports from investigators who met with Evers and made deals with him to defuse boycotts or marches. Was he a collaborator or a negotiator?

A damaging memorandum was sent on March 31, 1967, from Earle Johnston Jr., director of the commission, to Lee Cole, a commission investigator. "It has been reported to this office that on one or two occasions you mentioned to people in your territory, 'We have Charles Evers in the palm of our hand,'" the memo says. "Whether the report is true or not, I would much prefer that you never make any such statement because it might jeopardize some of our troubleshooting procedures. You may say at any time that we have a communication with Evers, but I would not go any further than that."

I asked Evers about this. We were in his office at a radio station he manages, and the walls were covered with an unusual assemblage of political photographs from the 1960s and '70s. There were several pictures of him with Bobby Kennedy—Evers was with Kennedy on the day he was assassinated. Just a few inches away from the Kennedy pictures there's an autographed shot of Richard Nixon.

Evers holds anti-welfare and anti-abortion views that isolate him from many former allies in the civil rights movement. He thinks his liberal detractors are trying to use the Sovereignty Commission records to smear him. "I was cooperating with [the Sovereignty Commission] from the point of negotiation," Evers said. "It wasn't that I was going to tell on somebody. It was, 'We're going to march at eleven o'clock tomorrow, governor, and I want someone there to protect my people.'" He added, "I guess they're trying to say that I was playing both sides. Well, I'll play three sides if necessary.... Whatever it took, I would do that. I had enough of my people lynched; I had enough of the mistreatment; I had enough of 'em beaten and denied the right just to go and vote or get a damn drink of water. Whatever I could do on my part, if it meant kissin' ass, I'd kiss ass."

"You have to understand race relations, if not from a viewpoint of Welty or Faulkner in fiction, then from sociology," says the Reverend Edwin King, a leading white civil rights activist in the '60s who is now a professor at the University of Mississippi Medical Center. "We had an evil system, but it was a functioning society so that people had to have lots of very complex roles and blacks and whites had to have a great deal of communication. Thank God we overthrew that system, [but] somebody who doesn't understand it, looking back on it, might misinterpret it."

King and I were talking about principals of black schools who, as the files reveal, met with commission investigators. Were they self-interested informers, or did they have to deal with the white power structure in order to get books for their segregated schools? And what about Evers? While it's clear he was no angel—in his autobiography, he admitted to running numbers and being involved in prostitution in his younger years—Evers says he didn't know the white men he met with were from the commission. He says they introduced themselves as being "from the government." The lacerating criticism he now faces is reminiscent of the ease with which Eastern Europeans were scarred, belatedly, by contact they had with intelligence agencies. Genuine acts of treachery were abundant. But

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some cases were murkier. For example, onetime Czech dissident Jan Kavan unwittingly met a secret police operative in the 1970s, and the operative opened a file on him. Once police archives were opened, Kavan faced accusations of being a collaborator. He had to go to court to clear his name; he is now the foreign minister of the Czech Republic.

It is because of problems of this sort that King has opposed releasing the files without privacy guarantees. "We cannot let people be damned because this agency says, 'Information was received,'" King says. "Their definition of 'informant' is anybody who gave information.... These people are always name-dropping, the agents, to get more appropriations from the legislature, to impress the governor. If they can drop the name of a chancellor, a dean, or somebody prominent, it looks like they have contacts. Later, when it says, 'Information was received from so and so,' it looks like an informant."

If privacy rights were trampled 30 years ago by a spy agency's surveillance, would not those privacy rights be violated a second time by letting anyone walk in off the street and peruse the files? As the case of Charles Evers shows, contacts with a spy agency can be interpreted in a number of ways. And in the emotionally charged atmosphere created by the opening of secret files people are less likely to err on the side of forgiveness.

As if to prove this point, some civil rights veterans have begun to turn their suspicions on Ed King. This is particularly striking since King is a near-legend of the civil rights movement in Mississippi and has broken teeth (from beatings) and a nasty scar on his face (from a car accident he believes was designed to kill him) to attest to his resistance. He is portrayed as a hero in Taylor Branch's authoritative two-volume history of the civil rights movement. Nonetheless, because of his outspoken opposition to the indiscriminate release of the files and his request to keep his own file sealed, King has come under suspicion. Why, after all, would anyone oppose the release of his own file unless he wanted to prevent the world from finding out he was a snitch?

"Ed doesn't have a clean record, so that's why he doesn't want the records released," says Henry Kirksey, a prominent civil rights activist in the '60s. "Ed was one of my favorite people for years and years until I learned a part of what he was doing, but I know enough of what he was doing to know that he was not clean."

Kirksey admits he has no proof, and he does not insist that King's file, once opened, would reveal incriminating information. But Kirksey, along with other opponents of King, points out that some files, perhaps a large number, are thought to have been destroyed in the final years of the commission's life. King's file may be spotless today, Kirksey suggests, but it may not have been spotless at an earlier time. This sort of suspicion is one of the phantom-like symptoms of post-authoritarian whiplash; mistrust thrives even in the absence of evidence. Once you are convinced someone like R.L. Bolden may have been a traitor, how can you be sure about anyone else?

Of course, not everyone who favors opening up the files is a conspiracy theorist. David Ingebretsen is executive director of the Mississippi ACLU and a key proponent of releasing the files. His involvement in privacy litigation over those documents that are still under seal means he has been able to review them. I asked Ingebretsen whether he thinks King is trying to hide something. "There's nothing for him to cover up," Ingebretsen answered. "Ed is a true civil rights hero. I have to accept his argument that he's concerned about people's privacy rights. I just think he's wrong."

The argument from Ingebretsen and others is that the public has a right to know what the Sovereignty Commission was doing, and that, although some privacy rights may be invaded by opening the files, the invasion is rather mild and trumped by the greater good of exposing the commission's workings. Many of the people who were under surveillance are dead. Much of the information is innocuous: who attended which meetings; who said what. There are only a small number of cases containing deeply personal information (which may or may not be accurate), and, hopefully, the press will be responsible enough to not publicize unproven or irrelevant gossip.

Ultimately, Ingebretsen's argument won the day—all but 7,700 pages of files have been released, and a federal court is expected to rule soon on whether the final batch should be opened. Before the release last March, the court ordered the state to invite people who thought there might be files on them to request access before the release, and, if they wished, to request that either the files not be released or the names be deleted (informers were excluded from this offer). But, with 87,000 names in the files, it was virtually impossible to notify all the people, or even a substantial number, because their addresses were unknown. The state ran a few ads in local and national papers, but hardly anyone saw them, and only 42 people asked for their files to be protected. Those requests are now under review by a federal judge, William Barbour Jr.

Ingebretsen admits that many people whose files are now in the public domain received no warning. I mentioned to him that no country in the former Soviet bloc has undergone such a full release—in Germany, which has gone furthest down the road of openness, a person can view only his or her own Stasi file. Ingebretsen nodded and recalled that a Czech official who was visiting Mississippi stopped by his office recently and heard about the plan for opening the secret files to all comers. As Ingebretsen recalls, "He was surprised."

The end came quietly for the Sovereignty Commission. By the early '70s, with the battle against integration long lost, and the newer battle against radicalism on college campuses stirring little interest in the legislature, the financial tap was turned off. According to the minutes of the commission's final meeting on June 22, 1973, "Expressions of appreciation were made by members of the Commission to [Director W. Webb] Burke and the staff personnel for their faithful and efficient service of inestimable value rendered to the State Sovereignty Commission and to the State of Mississippi." •

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BOOKS & The Arts

Stanley Kauffmann on Films

Doodling and Delving

Woody Allen's screenplay for **Celebrity** (Miramax) is an elaborated doodle. He seems to have lined up some reminiscences of past characters (a mixed-up writer, an unfulfilled woman) and of smart-set sterilities (parties, parties, parties), added a few jokes, not necessarily of the keenest (about a film critic: "He used to hate every movie; then he married a young woman with a big bosom and now he loves every movie"), seasoned with a few dabs of sex frankness, and then just switched the word processor on. This new picture looks as if Allen had tapped along hoping that the tapping would lead somewhere. It didn't, but he discovered that he had enough pages for a film anyway. (Including a few prestige-pumping quotes from Eliot and Tennessee Williams.)

This ad hokum script is the penalty that he and we must pay for his position. Allen is unique in American film, a writer-director who is in every creative sense independent and yet who in every industry sense is mainstream (glittery casts, first-rank technicians). Thus established, he can do virtually any project he conceives and can do it with top-notch colleagues—and his public will, in some measure, support him. (Especially abroad.) It would be easy to go through the Allen filmography and divide the list into those pictures that, whatever their defects, are memorable, and those that very probably would not have been made if they had originated with anyone else. High in this roster of non-existent yet existent films is *Celebrity*.

At least the leading male role, who is essentially the recently deconstructed Harry under another name, is not played by Allen himself. This is a plus, or anyway a helpful minus. But Allen has put Kenneth Branagh in the role. There's a difficulty here. The trouble is not that Branagh is a foreigner—his New York accent is passable. But the role is just a series of actions, mostly sexual in aim, with no realized person behind them; and Branagh is not an actor of strong personality. His Henry V, his Benedick, his Hamlet were all clear-cut, but in those cases the author gave him a good head-start. Branagh can fulfill what a good author gives him, but on his own, so to speak, he is pallid, almost transparent.

Branagh's wife here, from whom he separates at the start, is Judy Davis, an Australian who has played Americans before, for Allen and others. Davis is one of the best film actresses in the world, but it's discomfiting to see her in a female counterpart of Branagh's role—a series of sketches and incidents that pretend to delineate a human being. The woman had been a schoolteacher, and Allen contrives, not deftly, for her to become a TV personality under the auspices of a producer she meets who falls in love with her. She even takes a lesson in oral sex—from another woman and using two bananas—in order to please this new man more. (Allen, let's note, is not just being frantically up-to-date in sexual candor. He has been frank at least since *Everything You Always Wanted to Know About Sex* in 1972.)

Entwined with the adventures of the unyoked husband and wife are scenes in restaurants and at gallery openings and any other occasions that warrant the display of gorgeous women. A few of them Branagh pursues—in a manner apparently intended to suggest Allen's own jagged polygraph performing but that seems unattached to Branagh's body. Many of the scenes with women slog down in discussion, and the one point I really admired in the film was the fact that Allen dared to use a line that could be quoted against him. At one point a young woman says to Branagh, "Let's just stay in tonight and not over-analyze things." In this script, that was brave of Allen.

Hilary and Jackie (October) is an English film and does not of course concern two American First Ladies. The two women of the title are the Du Pré sisters, the first of whom was a flautist who retired early into happy domesticity, the second of whom was Jacqueline, the famous and beloved cellist who died in 1987 of multiple sclerosis at the age of 42.

The screenplay by Frank Cottrell Boyce, based on a book by Hilary and Piers Du Pré, treats the story of the two sisters as a lyric—a song of sisterly love, nourishing yet difficult, as deep love between siblings often is, further complicated by Jackie's solipsism, which increases as her fame grows. Eventually it even intrudes into Hilary's marriage. Annand Tucker, the director, who makes his feature debut here after much work with the BBC, concentrates on the swell and surge of Boyce's script and succeeds in giving the film a touch of other-world-

FILMS WORTH SEEING

Dancing at Lughnasa. *Meryl Streep, Irish now, as one of five Donegal sisters. Sensitively done, but Brian Friel's play seems here even more glaringly a bloated one-acter.* (Reviewed 11/30/98) **Gods and Monsters.** *Ian McKellen is an exquisite dandy as the Hollywood director James Whale, who is interested erotically in his gardener. Silky texture. (12/14/98)* **Happiness.** *Smooth and outrageous in its honesty about contemporary attitudes toward sex. Oh, yes, and toward love. (11/9/98)* **Very Bad Things.** *Here, too, modern morality is plumbed, only here the story moves from sex to murder. The screenplay wobbles increasingly, but the ensemble acting—of prosperous young Californian characters—is almost balletic. (12/14/98)*—**SK**

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Books.

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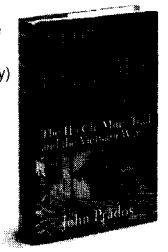

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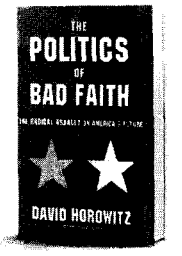

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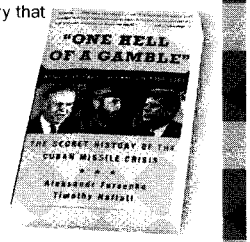

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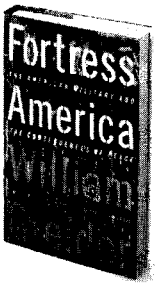

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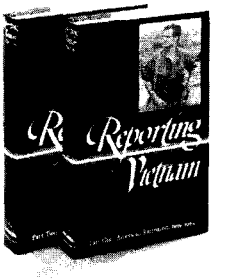

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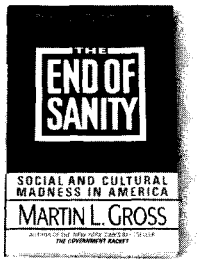

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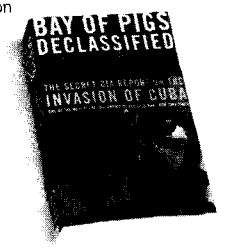

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liness from start to finish. Tucker is overfond of 360-degree shots—he circles the two sisters when they are children on a beach, he circles Jackie when she is playing—but he convinces us sheerly visually that we are dealing with extraordinary people, even when they are sitting in an ordinary kitchen having breakfast.

On that beach at the start the two very young girls see a mysterious woman. Jackie goes over to speak to her, then whispers to Hilary what the woman has said. We don't hear it. At the end, in a dream sequence, we see that scene again, and this time we learn who the woman is and what she says to Jackie. This prologue and epilogue, the only mystical elements in the film, do not help.

But aside from this mystical lapse, the film takes the two girls—realistically, endearingly—into adolescence and first maturity with glow and excitement and hurt and welcome touches of silliness. Hilary manages to recover from the discovery of Jackie's musical superiority—Hilary is greatly helped by a devoted and charming young man—and Jackie never commits the barbarism of trying to console Hilary in this matter.

Jackie meets Daniel Barenboim, converts to Judaism, and marries him. The marriage, happy enough in some regards, does not completely prosper. Depressed and nervous, Jackie goes to stay for a while in the country with Hilary and Kiffer, her husband, and their children; and Jackie suggests that she share Kiffer's marital attentions. After some reluctance and disagreement, this happens—we're not sure how often—and it restores Jackie's spirits. Barenboim visits; but, though sympathetic, is willing to leave Jackie there.

In time Jackie resumes her career, international and garlanded, until the disease starts to encroach in 1973, when she is 28. (The film omits the fact that she continued to work—as a teacher, including TV classes.) We are given just enough of her physical decline to see that a winged spirit is being more and more completely immured in a carapace of torment.

Emily Watson, familiar now from *Breaking the Waves* and *The Boxer*, plays Jackie and is generous with the young genius's "genius-ness." Watson has an instinct for naked, electric emotion, for lightning response, but once in a while Tucker asked, or permitted, a touch of the consciously fey that won such plaudits in *Breaking the Waves*. As Hilary, Rachel Griffiths is absolutely lovely and lovable; so is Celia Imrie as the mother. Charles Dance, a distinctive actor, is wasted in the nondescript role of the father; but David Morrissey tumbles in winningly as Kiffer. James Frain has the peculiar job of being the young Daniel Barenboim. I assume that the real Barenboim saw and approved, which doesn't make it less peculiar. (Two years ago I went to a Barenboim piano recital, was enchanted by his playing, and was struck by the contrast between his music and his completely impassive demeanor. This film, concerned with the much younger man, only underscores that contrast.) •

An unsung hero (and critic) of the left.

Waiting for the Barbarians

By Paul Berman

I.

Cornelius Castoriadis lived the classic life of the intellectual as hero—the lonely thinker who adopts an unpopular position, clings to it in the face of public scorn and private difficulties, turns out to be right, and ends up, to universal astonishment, having a genuine impact on events, in Castoriadis's case mostly in France, but with rippling after-effects all over the world. He was born in Istanbul in 1922, grew up in Athens, and came of age during the Metaxas dictatorship and the Nazi occupation, at the very lowest point of European history. Yet those years of his youth were also a moment when young intellectuals all over the continent were coming to believe that socialist revolution loomed just over the horizon, and the extreme right was about to yield to the Marxist left, and new civilizations were going to arise. Naturally Castoriadis enlisted in the Communist youth movement in Greece.

A prickly independence marked his thinking even then, though. Soon enough he slipped away to join the underpopulated ranks of Greek Trotskyism, where people dreamed of the same revolution as the Communists but in versions free of Stalin's shadow. Greece in the 1940s slid from German occupation to civil war, and to be a young Trotskyist in those circumstances was to be hated by nearly everyone—by the right-wingers as a dangerous leftist, by the Communists as an enemy of the Soviet Union. The Communists launched a murder campaign against Greece's Trotskyists. And so, in December 1945, Castoriadis fled to France on a famous ship called the *Mataroa*, along with several other Greeks of the extreme left who would go on to make names for themselves in the intellectual ferment of Paris.

In France, Castoriadis dutifully enlisted in the French section of Trotskyism's grandiosely titled Fourth International. Yet the dissident spirit was by then a mania in him, and he found his way into an alliance with his fellow Fourth Internationalist, the young philosopher Claude Lefort, on the far left of the Trotskyist movement. He and Lefort put together an opposition faction, then led their faction out of the International. In 1949 the tiny group began publishing an "organ of revolutionary criticism and orientation" (in the editors' cheerfully bureaucratic description) called *Socialisme ou barbarie*, or *Socialism or Barbarism*, with the title drawn from a remark by Trotsky about mankind having to choose either socialist progress or barbarous collapse.

Getting the journal into print and into the hands of its subscribers must have been extremely difficult, and perhaps a little frightening, too, at least for Castoriadis, owing to his vulnerable status as a political refugee. He wrote prolifically for his organ of revolutionary criticism and orientation, but only under such names as "Paul Cardan," "P. Chaulieu," and "Marc Coudray," which kept his Hellenic true identity safely hidden, and at the same time prevented him from enjoying the satisfactions of authorial fame. But the satisfactions would never have been great in any case. *Socialism or Barbarism* was normally published in editions of three hundred. By the early 1950s, membership in the faction had sunk to the molecular level of a dozen comrades.

Now and then some lonely left-wing personality enlisted in the group anyway, which involved assuming all kinds of partisan responsibilities and paying sufficient dues to keep the magazine afloat. But Castoriadis and Lefort, the two lead-

Paul Berman is the author of *A Tale of Two Utopias: The Political Journey of the Generation of 1968* (Norton).

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ers, were always arguing, and the organization kept breaking up amoebically into schismatic sub-groups, which reunited only to re-enact the same traumatic split later on. At its height in the 1960s, the group could still claim less than a hundred members—the "Barbarians," as they were fondly or ruefully known to their friends, who were few. The group's influence hovered around zero, for all that anyone could see.

Castoriadis was a brilliant man and tremendously energetic, and he could have achieved all kinds of worldly successes, if he had thrown himself into something more in tune with the age. His day gig (a reasonable phrase, given his enthusiasm for American jazz) consisted of drawing up economic analyses for the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (otherwise known as the Club of the Rich, a society of the capitalist elite, which made for a piquant paradox in the life of a Marxist thinker). But once the day's work was done and he was back home from the Club of the Rich, there was never any question of anything more practical. With him, it was *Socialism or Barbarism* or nothing.

You might suppose that he was driven to such a life by the lure of the Dreyfusard ideal—by the particular fashion for intellectual posturing that, in Paris after the war, was embodied by Sartre, the man of righteous engagement. But that was not Castoriadis's idea at all. He did not admire Sartre. He barely took the trouble to read him. The very word "intellectual" struck Castoriadis as something to be avoided, both on aesthetic grounds (given that in his estimation the word exuded a defensive arrogance) and on logical grounds (for who is not in some respect an intellectual?). His own notions were strictly those of the radical left and its ancient traditions. To make sense of those notions and of his devotion to them, however, you have to step back from several generations' worth of received ideas, and look at radical leftism and its doctrines from a wider angle, beginning at their moment of birth, a hundred and fifty years ago.

The Castoriadis Reader
edited and translated by David Ames Curtis
(Blackwell, 470 pp., $26.95)

World in Fragments: Writings on Politics, Society, Psychoanalysis, and the Imagination
by Cornelius Castoriadis
edited and translated by David Ames Curtis
(Stanford University Press, 507 pp., $22.95)

Political and Social Writings
by Cornelius Castoriadis
edited and translated by David Ames Curtis
(University of Minnesota Press,
Volume 1: 347 pp., $17.95
Volume 2: 362 pp., $17.95
Volume 3: 403 pp., $19.95)

Philosophy, Politics, Autonomy: Essays in Political Philosophy
by Cornelius Castoriadis
edited by David Ames Curtis
(Oxford University Press, 304 pp., $19.95)

The Imaginary Institution of Society
by Cornelius Castoriadis
translated by Kathleen Blamey
(MIT Press, 418 pp., $17.50)

II.

For what was radical leftism, this doctrine that Castoriadis made his own, in its original, pre-modern innocence? It was an excitement, a bit of grand optimism, from the nineteenth century—the excitement that came from watching the industrial revolution and deducing (correctly) that, in time, a new society was bound to arise, and was bound to be freer and more just than any of the feudal and agrarian societies of the past. All sorts of people experienced that excitement in the middle of the nineteenth century, and radical leftism merely offered a proletarian variation, grimmer and more violent than the middle-class version. And radical leftism stipulated that, in the better society of the future, after the revolutionary cataclysm, the workers and the artisans were going to occupy the seat of power and impose their values on everyone else, just as the feudal lords and the churchmen had done in the past, except this time for the general good.

Today we associate the left-wing idea with Marx, for the simple reason that Marx's doctrine, like every deep idea, contains a mysterious ability to mutate—in Marx's case, to be the voice of the industrial workers in one era, then the voice of labor bureaucracy in another era, then the voice for Asiatic despotism (to use an old phrase), then a voice for anti-imperialism, and onward into the exoticisms of the postmodern academy. The ability to change and to adapt has kept Marxism unpredictably alive at a time when most other expressions of the old nineteenth-century excitement have long ago turned to ash. Still, for all of Marxism's theoretical power, in the nineteenth century the clearest and purest expressions of radical leftism came from a series of authors whose only relation to Marx and his movement was rivalry and distrust. These were the

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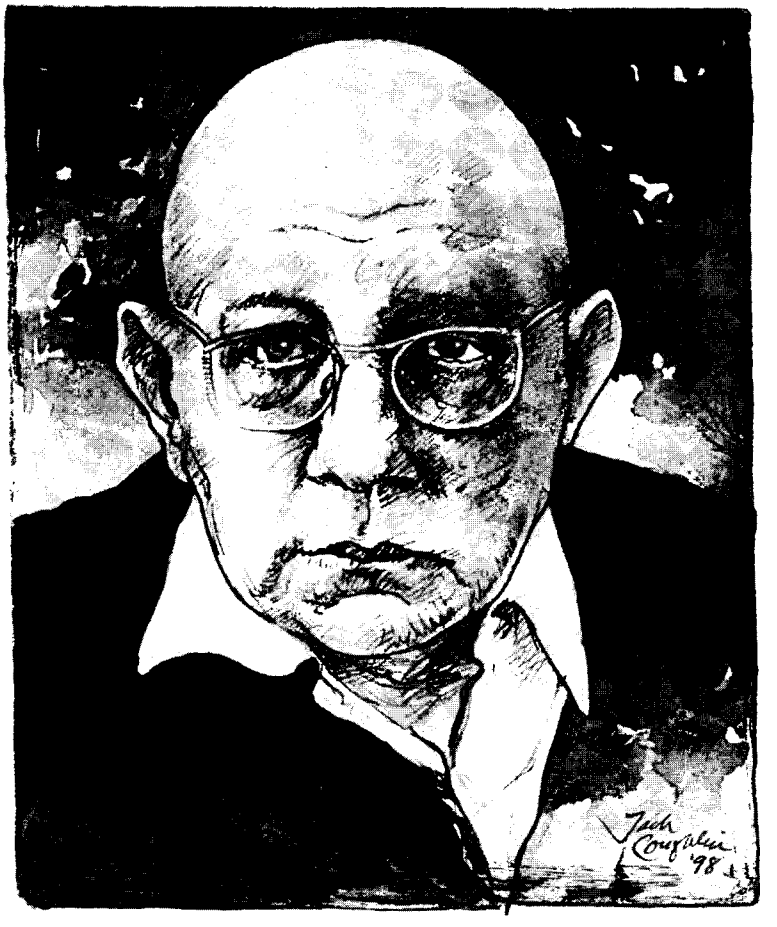
anarchist revolutionaries, whom no one reads today: Proudhon, Bakunin, James Guillaume, Elisée Reclus, Kropotkin, and a few others, creative thinkers all.

The anarchist writers explained exactly how the workers in a socialist society might organize their new enterprises, which is something that Marx himself never got around to discussing in any detail. They showed how the workers might form committees to administer any particular factory or business; how the committees might federate together into a decentralized economic structure across the whole of society; how the local municipalities might establish democratic systems and likewise federate together in a political structure; how a grassroots self-government might prove to be infinitely more efficient and productive than any top-down despotism. In a word, these writers were utopians.

Their utopia gave them a standard by which to judge, among other things, their Marxist competition. Beginning as early as the 1840s (in a famous, sharply worded letter from Proudhon to Marx) and culminating in some prophetic passages in Bakunin's pamphlet *The Knouto-Germanic Empire* in the 1870s (where Bakunin predicted an infernal marriage of Russian Czarism and German Marxism), the anarchist writers noticed Marxism's strange ability to mutate—and the likelihood that its mutation would arrive at tyranny.



CORNELIUS CASTORIADIS
BY JACK COUGHLIN FOR THE NEW REPUBLIC

The anarchist writers observed that Marxism's leaders were intellectuals who claimed to be the voice of the workers. Therefore Marxism rested on a lie. The Marxist leaders claimed to have mastered the intricacies of science. Therefore any government that emerged from Marxism's lie was going to be dictatorial, since nothing is more arrogant than a claim to mastery over science. The mendacious Marxist dictatorship was going to yoke together the separate spheres of politics and economics under a single central authority. Therefore Marxism's dictatorship was going to be more relentless even than early capitalism. And so, in the mid-nineteenth-century writings of the radical left, you find (in the pages of Marx himself and a number of other authors) some first stirrings of twentieth-century totalitarianism, in its left-wing version; and you find (in the anarchist polemic against Marx) the earliest formulations of what would become twentieth-century anti-totalitarianism.

You find both, not one. Only what happened, in the subsequent history of the radical left, to the part that was anti-totalitarian? Anarchism prospered for a while as a working-class movement in countries here and there. But it did not prosper intellectually, due to its bias against anything that mutates. Sometimes the original insights petrified into wooden dogmas, which engendered a number of terrorist episodes, which engendered a cult of martyrs and political prisoners, which might have ended anarchism's utility to mankind. And yet, in the twentieth century, once Lenin and the Marxists had come to power in Russia, the anarchists right away identified Bolshevik rule as the very kind of despotism that their own classic authors had prophetically foreseen. And the devotion to political prisoners and generally to the idea of liberty led the anarchists to produce a remarkable protest literature about the new kind of despotism.

It was the anarchists who, earlier than everyone else, began compiling facts and figures about mass imprisonment in the Soviet Union. To cite a genuinely magnificent example, there was the pioneering work by Bakunin's and Kropotkin's disciple Gregory P. Maximoff, *The Guillotine at Work*, published in Chicago in 1940 by the Alexander Berkman Fund for Political Prisoners (with editorial contributions from Ralph Chaplin, the author of America's labor anthem "Solidarity Forever")—a shattering two-volume documentation of what would only later be known as the Gulag archipelago. There were the newspaper accounts in what remained of the old anarchist labor press, from the New York Yiddish-language *Freie Arbeiter Stimme*, which documented Bolshevik crimes right from the start, to the Spanish-language *Guángara libertaria*, the organ of the anarcho-syndicalist Cuban food-workers' union in its Miami exile, which kept up the same documentation, adjusted to Cuba, into the 1990s.

Yet the job of updating the old anarchist criticism of left-wing totalitarianism passed into non-anarchist hands—into one little group after another who considered themselves to be Marxists, from the far-left edge of the Marxist movement. There were the revolutionary socialists around Rosa Luxemburg in the early years of the twentieth century; the so-called "left-wing communists" in the Netherlands immediately following the Bolshevik Revolution; the German "council communists" in their own country and in American exile during the '30s. All of those people wanted to draw a neat line between Marxism's original revolutionary goals and the counterrevolutionary uses to which Marxism had been put by the Bolsheviks. (The argument against Communism that was offered by the social-democratic "orthodox" Marxists derived from other sources, without a root or a precedent in anarchism.)

For some reason, though, each of those ultra-left schools of anti-Bolshevik Marxism ended up suffering the same

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fate as the old-time anarchists, and shriveled into a dogmatic sect, or disappeared altogether. A really vigorous school of left-wing criticism—something capable of enduring several decades, and of influencing events on a large scale—came into being only in the 1940s, from within the little world of Leon Trotsky's followers, in the years after his assassination in 1940. The first step in that Trotskyist development took place in the United States at the beginning of the 1940s, in the circles around Max Shachtman and his Workers' Party—in the writings of James Burnham, Dwight Macdonald, C.L.R. James, and a number of other hardy left-wing individuals who tried to push Trotsky's analysis of Soviet society one step forward.

The Americans never did settle on any single new formula to describe the Soviet reality, and eventually they went their separate ways, rightward and leftward. But they did broach the topic: "the Russian Question." And *Socialism or Barbarism* was their French counterpart. It was a little slower than the Americans in getting started (though Castoriadis went on to collaborate with James and other people from the United States in the 1950s), and a little less talented than the Americans from a literary point of view; but it was a lot more rigorous, philosophically.

The chief instinct of *Socialism or Barbarism* was to clear away some false definitions of socialism, especially the notion that socialism is merely supposed to guarantee a proper consumer society for all, with a lot of free time, like modern capitalism only better. The Barbarians wanted to go back, instead, to the old anarchist notion, according to which socialism means the freedom for everyone to enjoy a craftsman's independent life—to work at something useful and honorable, and to control one's own labor, and to find satisfaction and dignity in it. The idea was a socialism of daily life, not just of big institutions and macroeconomics. From the Barbarian point of view, there was nothing socialist about nationalizing an economy or waiting for left-wing governments to shower the workers with social benefits. "The realization of socialism on the proletariat's behalf by any party or bureaucracy whatsoever is an absurdity, a contradiction in terms, a square circle, an underwater bird."

In Castoriadis's view, "the program of the socialist revolution can be nothing other than *worker's management*." And to spell out what such a thing might mean in mid-twentieth-century Europe, he went about constructing a new utopia of his own, under the title *On the Content of*

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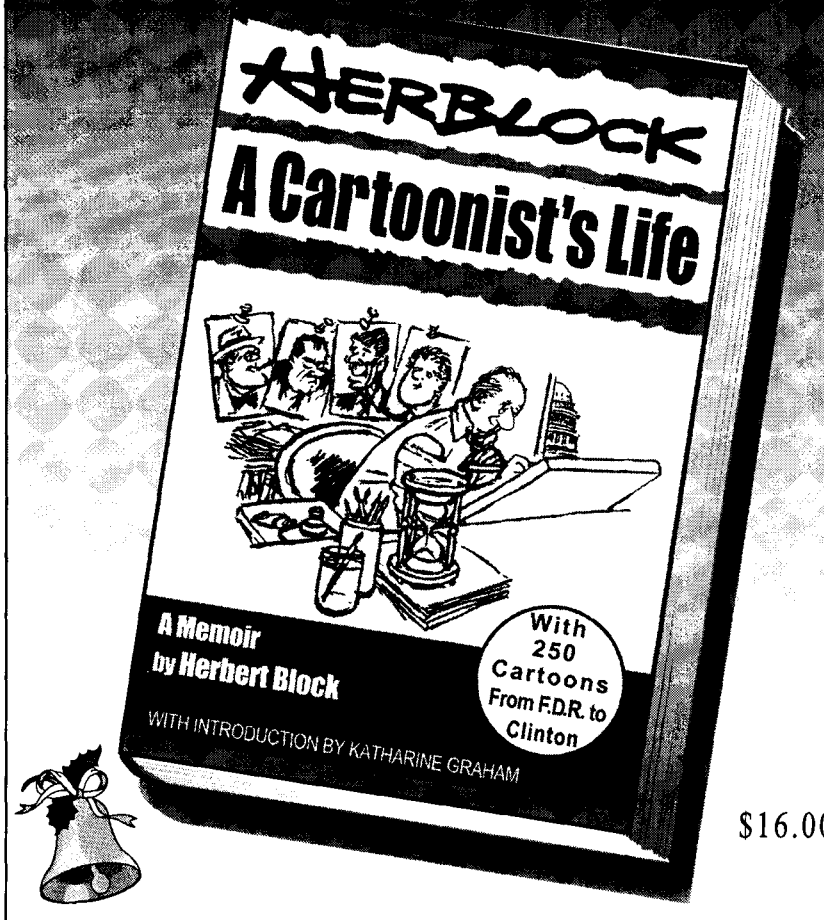

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Socialism. It ran as a series in the journal and can now be found in the first volume of his *Political and Social Writings* and excerpted in *The Castoriadis Reader.* He described how the factories might be run by democratic and egalitarian councils of their own workers; how the factory councils might federate together into a national republic of councils; and how the council government might make political decisions and draw up economic plans in a spirit of social solidarity. At the top of his system was going to be an elite group of technocrats, organized into something he called a "plan factory," who would use a computer to make recommendations to the rest of society. There was going to be a place for consumer markets, too, and for private farms.

It was a utopia in the old anarchist spirit, except that Castoriadis used the forbidden word "government," and he showed a bit more confidence in his proposed new institutions than the anarchists ever did. The anarchist utopias typically made a point of leaving room for people who might not otherwise fit in, for alternative systems and vegetarians and nudists and oddball cultural movements of every kind, no matter how remote from the proletarian idea. Individual liberty was the anarchist god, even if individual liberty might break up the orderly workings of the new society. Something in the old anarchist idea kept veering into the artistic chaos of the avant-garde. But Castoriadis, in this phase of his thinking, wanted to do away with social contradictions, every one of them. His own god, as with any good Marxist, was the end of alienation.

In his system there was going to be local rule, as in a nineteenth-century American farm town or an ancient Greek city; and there was going to be centralized administration. "In a socialist society there will be no conflict between centralization and the autonomy of grass-roots organs." Somehow it escaped him that, in his proposed republic of councils, power was going to fall into the hands of the technical experts and their computers. He never could specify how proletarian solidarity and proletarian freedom were going to avoid stepping on each other's toes. In the matter of comparative utopias, the anarchist versions have always seemed preferable on that count, and on one other count as well.

Kropotkin and the anarchists constructed their utopias in the confident belief that history was on their side, and large publics were interested, and sooner or later the labor movement and the working class were going to act on the anarchist ideas. The confidence of those anarchists came out in their tone—in Kropotkin's case, the genial tone of a professorial Russian prince, light, orderly, and charming. But Castoriadis could not possibly feel that kind of confidence. By the 1950s, the sentiment for socialist revolution all over Europe was in some respects stronger even than in Kropotkin's time. But the libertarian half of that desire had pretty much dropped away.

Castoriadis's utopia might have seemed pleasant enough to the mainstream of the left-wing intellectuals in France, if all he had meant was to complain about consumer capitalism. But he meant to hold up a standard to the Soviet Union, and his standard showed all too plainly that, under Communism, a worker's life was nothing but grim exploitation. The standard revealed Communism to be the opposite and the enemy of everything that socialist revolution was supposed to create—a monstrosity. So said Castoriadis and his Barbarians. And they paid heavily for those views.

In 1953, Lefort wrote a firm essay against Sartre and his sympathy for Stalin, and Castoriadis came to Lefort's defense with a violent essay of his own, which you can find in the *Political and Social Writings.* But Sartre was the king of Parisian intellectual life, and attacks on him from the small-fry militants of the anti-Communist ultra-left were nothing, and he responded with a curl of his lip—the famous sneering statement, directed at the Barbarians, that "an anti-Communist is a dirty rat." Such was the tone of the age. It seems to have had a bad effect on Castoriadis's way of presenting himself. His fists were in the air. His prose style was gnarled, in the involuted fashion of someone who has read too much Hegel. The geniality and the easy popularity of a Kropotkin, the sunny confidence and the simple air—none of that was his.

III.

Why did he stick with his idiosyncratic revolutionary project? In the first years after the war, it was because he expected the Soviet Union and the Western powers to fall into still another war (as had nearly happened in Greece), which he thought would set off a social revolution—a common enough idea at the time. Then came the East German workers' revolt of 1953, which showed that proletarian uprisings were entirely possible, and the Hungarian Revolution of 1956, which suggested that a republic of councils was more than a utopian fantasy. But finally, I think, Castoriadis was fortified in his ideas by another consideration, which is clear enough if you keep his own doctrines in mind. For Castoriadis looked reverently on the workers' movement as a pinnacle of civilization, and he found himself living in Paris, which was the world capital of the left-wing idea. But Paris's leftism was unspeakably perverse.

Half of Europe had fallen under an imperialist occupation, and large parts of the entire world had slipped into the worst sort of despotism, all in the name of the left. But Parisian leftism, in its dominant variety, could see nothing of the sort. Castoriadis hated injustice, and he hated imposture. He responded to snubs and attacks the way anyone would; but he responded, too, with a feeling of certainty, based on his own analyses of the Russian Question, and from the lofty heights of what he knew for a fact, he hurled disdain down on every possible left-wing fraud. His strength was personal. Yet it came to him also from a century of left-wing thought—from the authentic tradition of the left, the leftism that stood for workers' management, the leftism that was despotism's enemy and not its friend. He was more than a writer without readers. He was the grand guardian of left-wing thought, at least of its truer half. And he knew that he was, and he was not wrong.

You might suppose that his fury and confidence made Castoriadis into something of a fanatic. A hint of megalomania does creep up, now and then, in his essays—in the brutality of his tone and in the clear implication he leaves that any conceivable topic you could raise would surely fall under the system of his own ideas, if only he had the time to work out the analysis. Castoriadis hectors. Yet he was perfectly willing to challenge his own doctrines, which genuine fanatics will never do.

He was too good an economist to remain satisfied for long with Marx's *Capital.* As early as 1953, he began to lay out a series of devastating observations about Marx's economic concepts—which was hard to do, psychologically speaking, for anyone who had come out of Trotsky's movement and its cult of Marx. The devastating observations led him to wonder if Marxist interpretations of the working class and its historical mission had any meaning at all. By 1965 he responded to his own accumulated wonderings (and to the upset they caused among his orthodox comrades) by taking the sad and frustrating step of, first, folding the journal, and then, a

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year later, dissolving the group.

But then, just as he broke up his tiny sect and steeled himself to seek out some new direction in life—at that most dismal of moments, when his every project and ambition seemed to have crumpled to the floor—events began to go his way. There had been forty issues of *Socialism or Barbarism*, and now a few ideas from those forgotten issues began seeping upward, as if from the tomb, into what remained of the old proletarian anarchist movement in France. The old anarchist groups sprouted new energies and concepts, and, here and there, began to attract for the first time a few university students.

One of the comrades from *Socialism or Barbarism*, Guy Debord, had helped to organize a little committee of the avant-garde called the Situationist International, whose task in life was to adapt the old ideas into a condemnation of consumer capitalism and modern city life—to give the ancient doctrines of the radical left an aesthetic twist. And the Situationists, too, began to attract a few students, who then went on to cause a few ripples within the larger pond of French student life. It was not that back issues of *Socialism or Barbarism* were easy to get hold of, or that Castoriadis was in any way famous; and yet a handful of students kept finding their way to the old magazine even so, or found their way to Lefort, whose name at least was known. Then came the student uprising and the labor general strike of May and June 1968. And the magazine's handful of student readers turned out to be mass leaders.

It is sometimes said that Castoriadis was the gray eminence behind the events of May and June, that 1968 was his personal triumph. Castoriadis himself grew fond of the notion, out of the reasonable pride of anyone who had always wanted to give birth to a revolution; and out of a philosophical conviction that any uprising worthy of the name could only conform to his own principles of grassroots self-management. His translator and editor David Ames Curtis underlines the paternity claim in the introduction to *The Castoriadis Reader*, with some justice, too, though it would be a serious error to exaggerate how much.

The students marching through the Paris streets in May and June of that year drew also on any number of ideas that Castoriadis was angrily against: Third Worldist and Maoist ideas for several thousand toughened militants, the old-fashioned Trotskyist orthodoxy for a good many others, not to mention a mélange of this and that for more people still, and no doubt a series of gloriously empty slogans and faddist impulses for the largest number (as in any mass movement). Herbert Marcuse, not Cornelius Castoriadis, was the intellectual hero of the moment, so far as the press and the public could see. And yet, at the apex of the rebellion, among the top leaders and the student intellectuals, where the press and the public could not see, *Socialism or Barbarism* really did enjoy a startling prestige.

The single most popular and important of the '68 student leaders, Dany Cohn-Bendit, has always insisted on the Barbarian influence, and for reasons that are easily enough understood, if you stop to consider the uprising and its goals. The libertarian impulses that had disappeared from the European left were reborn in the student movement, and when the students went looking for texts to read, they found some part of what they wanted in Castoriadis's almost-anarchist utopia from the decade before, and in some of the straight-out anarchist writers, too.

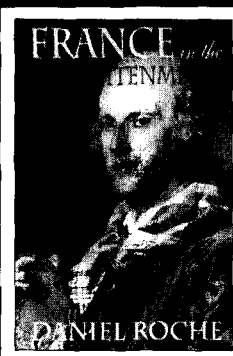
And there was a second reason why *Socialism or Barbarism* seemed so appealing. For why did the students take an interest in utopian ideas at all? What kind of argument or social criticism were they trying to make? The students felt themselves to be living in a world dominated by useless cultural and sexual customs of the past; felt a pressure to conform, and could find no reason to do anything of the sort; felt an antipathy for every authoritarian structure of French life. And what was the worst, the most galling, of those unbearable authoritarian structures? This is what American observers have never been able to understand about the French '68. A full quarter of the French electorate was still loyally voting for the Soviet Union's party in France, the Communists, in plain demonstration that, in France, the ideas and organizations of mid-century European totalitarianism had been defeated only on the right, not yet on the left.

The students, most of them, were far from clear about what they thought of Communism—whether Communism was a dreadful authoritarian structure that ought to be overthrown, or an admirable way of rebelling that had been rendered slightly dreadful by its current set of ham-handed local French leaders. Either way, the student uprising was directed against the French Communist Party, at least in part. And among the radical vanguard of the students, the left wing of the left wing, there were always several lively personalities who knew exactly what to think.

DANIEL ROCHE

FRANCE IN THE ENLIGHTENMENT

TRANSLATED BY ARTHUR GOLDHAMMER



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Those several personalities frankly despised Communism—all of it, the entire tradition. Cohn-Bendit wrote the principal manifesto of the student uprising, which was published in English under the mystifying title *Obsolete Communism: The Left-wing Alternative.*

But the actual title of that book, rendered word for word, was *Leftism: Remedy to the Senile Illness of Communism*—which makes clear enough that hatred of Communism was Cohn-Bendit's main emotion, and leftism was his handy bludgeon for beating what he hated. And where could students with that kind of sentiment read about Communism? They could hardly turn to the adult conservatives, who were antipathetic to student radicalism on every count. They could not rely on Sartre. And so, on the topic of Communism, the students looked in exactly the same obscure corner where they had also found a few rough sketches of their libertarian utopia—in the back issues of *Socialism or Barbarism*, and in the circle of minuscule sects that had taken up ideas and inspirations from the defunct magazine.

IV.

During the next few years, in the world that came out of the French student uprisings, the argument over Communism went through a series of strange ups and downs. The craze for Mao grew stronger, not weaker, which tilted some of the anti-authoritarians of 1968 back into the totalitarianism of the past. There was a craze for violence. The militants went out of their minds. It was not lucidity's finest hour. Still, the libertarian instincts did sort themselves out, after a while. And then, in 1974, came the French translation of the first volume of *The Gulag Archipelago*, and people all over the French left, having spent several years in a dither of confusion about the May-June events and their contradictory principles, had to decide how to respond.

People wanted to think new thoughts, but without losing their bearings. They wanted to know how to look with fresh eyes on this Russian writer who, in the past, they would instantly have dismissed as the dirtiest of dirty rats. They were a reading public in search of new reading glasses. And in those circumstances, the vogue for Cornelius Castoriadis (whose name began to be known only in 1970, when he received his French citizenship) and his defunct magazine (which by 1973 had become available in a reprint edition of ten thousand) grew larger still. The vogue could be seen in the best of the new books about Solzhenitsyn, which was Claude Lefort's *Un homme en trop* (*One Man Too Many*), and in the most influential, which was *La Cuisinière et le mangeur d'hommes* (*The Cook and the Maneater*) by André Glucksmann, one of the Maoists.

Those and a number of other books were the writings that finally destroyed Communism's intellectual prestige in France—and all over the world, gradually. You could have seen this by tracking the progress of Castoriadis's prestige, for example, in Spain, where tiny committees of the ultra-left brought out translations from the French, or in Latin America, where he was championed by Octavio Paz. Castoriadis himself was a bit slow to capitalize on the astounding change in his fortunes. Still, he did weigh in with a new essay of his own, "The Social Regime in Russia," in *Esprit* magazine in 1978—a genuinely brilliant analysis of Soviet Communism, which you can find in *The Castoriadis Reader.* And in 1981 he published a book called *Devant la guerre* (*Before the War*), which, for the first time in his career, succeeded in presenting his ideas to a mass public at full length, in his own words, and in his own name.

What precisely were those ideas—the ideas about Soviet society that proved so devastating to the reputation of Communism in the years after 1968? They were an extension of the same doctrines that he had worked out in the 1950s—his ideas about capitalist production and his complaints about Marx and the Marxists. Marx saw a struggle over profits between workers and capitalists, and regarded the struggle as unresolvable, except by revolution. Castoriadis, once he had rejected Marx's economics, saw a slightly different struggle. He noticed that capital, in order to stay in control, requires labor to be docile and submissive. But he also noticed that economic productivity requires labor to be active and engaged. Capitalism, in that respect, is always bumping up against an impossible combination of needs: the need to dominate labor totally versus the need to allow labor the freedom to do its job.

Marx's greatest mistake, in Castoriadis's judgment, was to suppose that, until the final catastrophe, capital gets to do everything it wants. In reality, the workers put up a fight on behalf of their own control of production, and their fight prevents the capitalists from running amok with fantasies of total mastery. It is the workers in every factory and shop who iron out the little wrinkles in industrial production. The workers oblige the capitalists to pursue social policies that keep the whole of society from falling apart, as would otherwise happen. In short, it is labor that makes capitalism viable.

From Castoriadis's standpoint, Communist society worked pretty much the same way that capitalism does, only more crudely. The Communist leaders, too, were drunk with visions of total mastery. But Communism, in its crudeness, was less inhibited than capitalism, and the workers were prohibited from putting up any resistance at all, except in their dreams; and nothing prevented the Communist rulers from lurching into wild economic lunacies.

Castoriadis pictured capitalism as irrationality, partially controlled; but Communism was irrationality, fully unleashed. He thought that, in the end, Communism was worse even than Fascism and Nazism. About the Soviet Union, he wrote that "this 'socialist' regime has still not been able to resolve the problem people resolved as early as the neolithic era: ensuring that one can survive from one harvest to the next. Nor has it resolved another problem, which has been resolved elsewhere since the time of the Phoenicians: supplying those ready to pay the price with the merchandise they are demanding."

Since the workers do have their dreams, and since total mastery is always a delusion, Castoriadis figured that Communism was by nature an extremely shaky system—much shakier than the capitalism of the West. The Communist leaders could hardly bring themselves to believe their own doctrines. Cynicism, instead of any kind of shared civic beliefs, held Communist society together—a cynicism that he predicted, in his *Esprit* essay in 1978, would not last much longer (though he knew that Communist doctrines could still be exported to remote ingenuous regions of the world). He believed that Communist Parties in the Soviet bloc were already losing influence, not to the workers, but to what he called, after Eisenhower, the military-industrial complex. And there was nothing that Communists could do about it, no possible reform they could undertake.

"The perspective of internal change," he wrote in *Devant la guerre*, "is a perspective of all or nothing." Meanwhile he worried about the combination of militarism and systemic irrationality. Communism's military-industrial complex seemed to him the one element of Soviet life that did run efficiently—more efficiently than its scary counterpart in the United States. His studies led him to that conclusion, anyway, which frightened the French public when he laid out the argument.

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Castoriadis judged that, by the early 1980s, the Soviet Union had achieved a nuclear dominance over the West. Owing to the disequilibrium of force, Soviet imperial control was expanding into remote impoverished zones around the world. Castoriadis did not feel that nuclear deterrence had imposed a rationality on the Soviet elite. All-out war seemed to him entirely likely. Nor did he think, after a few years of Ronald Reagan, that America's rearmament could achieve anything useful. The Red Army remained overwhelmingly powerful, and the anti-Communist counterforce in Europe seemed to him an easily-fractured mosaic of national armed forces. Reagan's Euro-missiles seemed to him pretty irrelevant.

What to do in the face of those frightening Cold War circumstances? In his later years he never did disavow his young man's dream of overthrowing the Soviets and the Western capitalists both. I have the impression that the sudden flowering of his influence among the students in 1968 turned his head for a while, and he began to think that maybe his old revolutionary hopes had some life to them, after all. He played with the idea of reorganizing his revolutionary group, and then, when reorganizing proved impossible, he spent a few years teaming up with the young Cohn-Bendit to promote the cause of radical ecology—Castoriadis's moment, at last, to display his magnificent bald head to cheering crowds, and to utter his gnomic words of ultra-radical counsel, and to savor the applause. But there was no future in that, and he realized soon enough that student uprisings and the new social movements that came out of 1968 were not going to overthrow bourgeois civilization, and there was not going to be a council republic, and the stubborn political structures of Western countries were going to remain what they were.

How to restrain the Soviets, then? Castoriadis's readers in the 1980s sometimes jumped to the conclusion that he had come out in favor of military counter-weights from the West, and that he favored some sort of nuclear opposition—more or less as some of the ex-Trotskyists in the United States had done. In France, Glucksmann, his own popularizer, wrote a best-selling book in defense of nuclear deterrence by the Western countries, with a splendid chapter narrated by a talking missile and another on Marcel Proust and the atom bomb. But that was not Castoriadis's style. He issued his warnings. He was grim-faced. Yet he could never straighten out precisely what he thought about the Western democracies, which kept him from adopting a strategic position of his own.

Sometimes he acknowledged, as if with a shrug, that Western democracies did manage to be democracies, in spite of imperialism and exploitation and ecological disaster, and that democracy should be defended. Still, the Cold War language of Western good guys and Eastern bad guys went against his grain; and then his frustration got the better of him, and he went back to flinging his old insults and slogans at the competing blocs and superpowers. He talked about Soviet concentration camps on one side and "pseudo-representative liberal oligarchies" on the other—bad versus bad, even if the Soviet bad was worse. He looked for a mobilization of citizens in the Western countries, and of small, non-aligned countries from around the world, to break up the Cold War altogether. It cannot be said that he wrote with any acuity about those mobilizations and how they should have behaved—not compared to what he had written about the Hungarian Revolution and the proletarian movements of long ago. And yet that great bald head of his went on generating thoughts, as if nothing stimulated him more than the slow fizzling failure of a political theory.

V.

He asked: why should anyone have bothered in the first place with a workers' movement or a libertarian utopia of workers' councils? What was the deep purpose behind those ideas—the goal that had animated people during the entire history of the classic left, from the 1840s to 1968 and beyond? It was this: to achieve independence of thought and action for ordinary people. Self-government for the individual and for society—a true self-government of the many and not just of the few. The workers' movement and the radical left had pictured those goals in a setting of coal smoke and factory frenzy. But the idea itself was broader than nineteenth-century industry. It was the idea of freedom (though he preferred the term "autonomy"), and its history was as old as the West.

In Castoriadis's account, the first phase in that history, the ancient Greek origins, lasted from the eighth century BC to the Periclean Age in the fifth century. Then the Greeks went into decline, and the idea and practice of autonomy faded away—only to reemerge in Western Europe in the medieval renaissance of the eleventh century. From that time on, the idea and the practice grew

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and flourished in the Western countries, especially in the workers' movement of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. It fell apart again only in the period beginning around 1950—when, in Castoriadis's gloomy view, the horrible workings of bureaucracy and capitalism buried freedom under the new Dark Age in whose murks we find ourselves today.

In this latter stage of his thinking, he kept strictly away from anything transcendental or Hegelian. He did not think that freedom was a seed within man, slowly germinating everywhere. Freedom, in his view, was something unusual, an idiosyncrasy of the ancient Greeks, which got passed along to their heirs in the West. Nothing about it was fated to spread anywhere else in the world.

That was his interpretation. To my mind, his argument raises more questions than it settles. Anti-Hegelianism ought to have its limits. But what seems to me exceptionally stimulating is Castoriadis's discussion of autonomy and its components. He never came around to endorsing anything as sappy and self-contented (in his ultra-left eyes) as liberal democracy, though now and then he sounded a little more respectful. But he did begin to wonder what the elements of autonomy must be, apart from its political structures. And he responded by writing a series of essays, some of his best, on the ancient Greeks. He considered that most societies over the course of history have been trapped in fixed universes of their own making, which has prevented people from thinking or doing anything very original. People in those societies have always imagined themselves humbly toiling below, while the gods rule from above, for better and for worse.

The gods go under different names. They might be the deities of the Bible, the Koran, or some other sacred text, or they might be called the Laws of History or the Laws of Economics. Yet their disheartening influence on poor, cowed mankind has always been the same. And somehow the Greeks, in his interpretation, broke out of that habit of thinking, in several ways at once. The Greeks invented tragic theater, which showed that man cannot know what the future holds, and that catastrophe is the result, and that there is no point in pretending otherwise. They invented the idea of objective history—a history written as if right and wrong are very much in doubt, and no one can claim automatically to have justice on his side, and not everything can be ascribed to the gods.

The Greeks invented philosophy, or the idea that basic principles should be critically examined. And finally they invented democracy—direct democracy, as Castoriadis was careful to specify, since anything but direct democracy seemed to him a fateful compromise with true autonomy. Democracy's special achievement was to put a limit on its own power, which is necessary because right and wrong cannot always be known for sure—because everything must be analyzed and questioned, and because there is no one but ourselves, no god or special caste of god-experts, to do the questioning. Democracy in that respect gave a proper civic shape to the several attitudes expressed in the tragedies, the histories, and the philosophies.

And what was the purpose, finally, of those several spectacular Greek inventions—the purpose of democracy, above all? He quoted Pericles (and he quibbled with Hannah Arendt's use of the same quotation) on love, on the practice of beauty and wisdom, and on the care and responsibility for the common good. But Castoriadis's way of expounding what he had in mind was not what you might expect, given his political background. After many years as an economist, he underwent a training in psychoanalysis, in the school of Jacques Lacan—except that he regarded Lacan's dissent from conventional psychoanalysis as lacking in sociological insight, and he ended up joining, with the perfect consistency of a born schismatic, a dissident psychoanalytic current called the Fourth Group. His later essays accordingly took on a psychoanalytic tone.

The purpose of psychoanalysis is to make us recognize that our habitual ways of thinking do not represent an eternal law of the universe—to make us understand that we can think new thoughts about ourselves and create new habits, if only we recognize what our customary patterns have been. Exactly in that way, Castoriadis wanted to remind us that society's structures and habits likewise begin as thoughts, which become institutionalized. And then society forgets that any such thoughts had ever existed and, instead, attributes the structures and habits to the eternal gods.

He admired the Greeks because, in their tragedies, their histories, and their philosophies, they deliberately set out to identify the patterns of their own imaginings. In the democracy of Athens, the Greeks looked for ways to change their own behavior, too—to reform themselves, and grow, and not go on repeating the old behaviors of an unsuccessful past. What excited him about Athens was not any particular constitution or political structure, but the way that constitutions and institutions kept changing, in the endless search for something better. That was what he came to want for modern society: not so much a perfect new utopian system (as he had wanted in his earlier writings) but constant questioning and ever new adaptations (as might be prompted by a few thoughts about utopian possibilities).

VI.

The key phrase in Castoriadis's new psychological vocabulary was "the social imaginary," in which he used "imaginary" as a French-style noun, not as an English-style adjective. It is a badly conceived phrase even in French, and preposterous in English. Castoriadis was truly an original, but it must be acknowledged that he was always looking for ways to highlight his own originality, to make his ideas seem even fresher than they were. A more modest Castoriadis, a Castoriadis easier to understand, might have paused now and then to indicate that sometimes he drew from Heidegger (for his fear of rational mastery) and sometimes from Popper and the liberals (for his rejection of any kind of determinism). Some of his arguments, particularly his insistence on denying to the human imagination any hint of the transcendental, put you in mind of Rorty and the American pragmatists.

But the vainglorious Castoriadis who actually existed set out, instead, to construct a philosophical language all his own, full of wild and incomprehensible terms: "combinatorics," "ensemblistic-identitary," "ensidic," "instillation," "abyssal," "magma," and so forth, even though some of those terms, if you study them carefully, turn out to have perfectly ordinary meanings. "Ensemblistic-identitary" and "ensidic," for instance, merely mean "logical," though you would never know it. As for the "social imaginary," that very unfortunate phrase means, more or less, the ability to dream up new social structures. The phrase went into affirmations such as this (which I dread to quote, for fear of prompting laughter—but it cannot be helped): "The social-historical institution is that in and through which the social imaginary manifests itself and brings itself into being. This institution is the institution of a magma of significations, social imaginary significations."

You have to read several hundred pages of Castoriadis's writings and innumerable discussions of his preposterous new vocabulary to make sense of those remarks. Yet he does mean to say some-

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thing. He means that everything begins in the imagination, and that imagination follows a logical path, and that imagination succeeds at last in creating a society whose myths and values make up a more or less coherent social and intellectual system. He means that, through a careful analysis of our own thinking and society's, we can arrive at a much clearer understanding of our own imagination. And we can use our understanding to adopt better social structures than anything we have created for ourselves in the present. Those arcane remarks contain, in sum, Castoriadis's great insight that psychology, politics, sociology, anthropology, and history cannot really be separated, and that by thinking of each sphere of knowledge in its own category, we delude ourselves into supposing that something other than our own imagination governs mankind.

I have to confess that whole essays of his are beyond me. Some of his sentences veer almost randomly into Greek, Latin, German, English, and French, as if no one language, or even three or four, could bear the weight of his thought. There is an essay in *The Castoriadis Reader* called "The Logic of Magmas and the Question of Autonomy" that careens out of the realm of language altogether into the world of set theory and mathematical equations, only to deposit the exhausted reader, at last, into the familiar zone of Castoriadis's several ideas about democracy and self-limitation. Everything would make sense, mathematical equations and all, I'm sure, if only I could follow it. And yet, for all my puzzlement, I have been reading Castoriadis ever since my own student days—ever since a time, during the high tide of the American New Left, when his writings could be found only in mimeographed pamphlets, under the name "Paul Cardan."

The pamphlets in those long-ago times were issued in English translation by a group of his London followers, and in America they were distributed to a few dozen readers by a wayward Philadelphia faction of the old Socialist Labor Party (not to be confused with the much larger Socialist Workers Party). I suppose that, even among the few dozen readers, not too many people actually got around to studying what the pseudonymous "Paul Cardan" had in mind. Still, those few of us who did make the effort received an excellent instruction, point by point, in what was wrong with Karl Marx. This cannot be Castoriadis's appeal today. And yet, faithful to the end, I still read him with profit and satisfaction, particularly in the handsome volumes scrupulously translated by David Ames Curtis, who has devoted half his life to bringing Castoriadis into English. Castoriadis turns out to be the only unreadable writer with whom I have wanted to maintain a life-long relation.

The pleasure and the profit in reading him today come, in part, from the chance to admire a genuinely firm moral character. It is refreshing to follow the intellectual progress of a man who spent his early years in a shabby era but kept his back straight, and even managed to prove, in his eventual triumph over Parisian fellow-traveling, that stiff spines serve a social purpose. When he died last December, even *L'Humanité*, the Communist newspaper in Paris, felt obliged to pay him homage under the respectful and apologetic title "Death of an Essential Dissident." That was a mark of his victory, and of its scale. But there is more.

Looked at from a distance, Castoriadis shared a good many philosophical ideas and attitudes with the other writers of his generation in Paris, the people who came into their own during the 1950s and early 1960s—the generation of Barthes, Foucault, and Derrida. All of those people wanted to break away from the Marxism and the Hegelianism of Sartre and the older generation. All of those people delighted in showing, each in his fashion, how doctrinal systems invariably turn into tyrannies. All of them laughed at the absurdity of the teleological optimists. They all believed, each in his way, that circumspection is wisdom.

All of them differed from ordinary liberals in nonetheless wanting to hold on to something of Marxism's spirit of criticism and revolt—to retain the spirit while getting rid of the underlying philosophy and some of the political conclusions. But, Castoriadis aside, those several philosophers hung on to Marxism's spirit mostly through tricks of rhetoric. They argued for intellectual modesty in tones that seemed to hint at the immodesty of Marxist grandeur. They made it seem as if their ostensible arguments were preliminary phases in a very different, buried argument, whose conclusions, if you could identify them, would expand Marxism's reach, instead of limiting it. Those writers said one thing and implied another; spoke on two levels at once; courted ambiguity; played games with their readers, and did everything with a slithery, hip brilliance.

Castoriadis's achievement was never to be hip. You might say that he, too, as much as the others, advocated an ironic sort of radicalism, if by irony you mean an insistence on doubting yourself. Yet he was never ironic about irony. His writings were never games or put-ons. He, too, wanted to reject large parts of the old philosophical core of Marxism and the main political stances associated with the radical left; and he wanted to save other parts. Yet he drew his distinctions with open arguments, which you can accept or dispute. That was why, among the philosophers of the radical left in France, he alone—he and his Barbarian comrades and a few of their friends—could honestly claim to have contributed mightily to the overthrow of Communism. For on the French left his was the only circle that was passionate about freedom.

You might conclude that Castoriadis's achievements are chained to the past—that he was the last of a line of great leftists. You could even suppose that he himself was a figure from Greek tragedy, that he had acted with a definite purpose in mind, and had succeeded only in accomplishing something wholly different; that he had wanted to revive and purify the radical left, and had ended up allowing the left to give up leftism. You might suppose that his was the leftism that brought about the end of leftism. But he did not picture himself that way. It never occurred to him that his sort of radical questioning could have lost its pertinence. He thought that none of the old problems of capitalism and civilization have been solved, none of the profounder problems. He was convinced that everything, absolutely everything, remains to be done.

In 1990 he wrote, in the introduction to *La Societé bureaucratique*:

> Communism has collapsed in Eastern Europe and, probably, its collapse will not be tardy in the other countries where it survives. But, depending on what may come out of the indescribable Russian chaos, its collapse only extends to new regions the piercing question that modern capitalism's evolution has posed in the rich countries for the last thirty years. In what degree does contemporary humanity have the power, and the will, to escape from the degradation of consumptionism and the media, from the domination of irresponsible bureaucracies and thin-skinned politicians, from the unchecked course of an uncontrolled and uncontrollable technology that is destroying Earth? In what degree does humanity have the power, and the will, to return to and deepen the individual and collective project of autonomy—a returning and a deepening that henceforth will shape not only humanity's emancipation but, as we see more and more clearly, its simple survival on this planet? •

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Night and Day

BY TERRY CASTLE

Cole Porter: A Biography by William McBrien

(Knopf, 459 pp., $30)

Was Cole Porter human? Friends (and enemies) often spoke of him as if he were something else—a kind of Puck or sprite or wind-up toy, possessed of eerie and mischievous gifts. After spotting him in the bar of the Paris Ritz, sipping Pernod and composing "his devastating little rhymes," Beverly Nichols, who didn't like him, compared the songwriter to a "startled leprechaun." Moss Hart, his collaborator on the musical *Seven Lively Arts*, found him "impish." "A little human music box" was Ben Hecht's phrase, while Agnes De Mille, choreographer of *Nymph Errant*, spoke of the strange, mincing way Porter walked ("very gingerly, with tiny steps") and thought his head looked like a doll's. Even Robert Kimball, the scholarly editor of *The Complete Lyrics of Cole Porter*, speaks of the composer's "mascot-like head," as if he were a ventriloquist's dummy.

This last image—of a miniature mandoll, perched uncannily in someone's lap—seems painfully apt. After a near-fatal riding accident on Long Island in 1937, in which a frightened horse rolled on him and crushed both his legs, the permanently lamed Porter had to be carried virtually everywhere by his valet Paul Sylvain. Several photographs of Porter from the 1940s and 1950s, reproduced in William McBrien's new biography, show him being hefted about—a tiny monkey in a tuxedo—by the beefy, black-haired manservant.

For all his brilliance, his success, and his charm—Oscar Levant called him the "rich boy who made good"—Porter himself seems to have wondered at times about his own humanity. Many of his songs are autobiographical—and as starkly self-interrogating as anything by Schubert. One of the more disturbing has to be "I'm a Gigolo," a frigid little ditty that Porter recorded in New York in 1935:

> I should like you all to know,
> I'm a famous gigolo.
> And of lavender, my nature's got just
> a dash in it.
>
> As I'm slightly undersexed,
> You will always find me next
> To some dowager who's wealthy rather
> than passionate.

The composer's famously arch declamation and twinkling arpeggios cannot hide, however, a growing malaise:

> Go to one of those nightclub places
> And you'll find me stretching my braces
> Pushing ladies with lifted faces
> 'round the floor.
> But I must confess to you
> There are moments when I'm blue.
> And I ask myself whatever I do it for.

With the turn to the refrain, the music shifts abruptly to the minor and gets slow and creepy and harmonically unsettled—like something, indeed, out of *Winterreise*. With the piano tapping out a sinister chromatic bass, Porter's voice takes on a spectral, whited-out quality, even as he limns his character's moral emptiness:

> I'm a flower that blooms in the winter,
> Sinking deeper and deeper in "snow."
> I'm a baby who has
> No mother but jazz,
> I'm a gigolo.
> Ev'ry morning, when labor is over,
> To my sweet-scented lodgings I go,
> Take the glass from the shelf
> And look at myself,
> I'm a gigolo.

A wan thought of "stocks and bonds" from "faded blonds"—"ev'ry twenty-fifth of December"—cheers the singer momentarily, but he quickly falls back into psychic desuetude:

> Still I'm just a pet
> That men forget
> And only tailors remember.

In the song's finale, when he declares, unconvincingly, how glad he is to be a gigolo, the tinny music seems to mock him, winding down slowly, like a failing clock as it weakens and stops.

The song is full of self-revelation—from the incriminating "dash" of lavender to the prodigal faded blondes. In 1919, as he was launching his career as a songwriter and a playboy in the ballrooms and the cafés of postwar Paris, the twenty-eight-year-old Porter, the Yale-educated scion of a well-to-do family in Peru, Indiana, had married Linda Lee Thomas, an invalidish, exorbitantly wealthy society divorcée fifteen years his senior. Theirs was the classic marriage of convenience. He was homosexual, promiscuously so; she was lonely and apparently asexual. (Despite popular rumors to the contrary, says William McBrien, there is no evidence that Linda was herself a lesbian.)

At the time of their marriage he was already syphilitic. To say that Linda bought Porter outright puts it too strongly; they seem to have genuinely loved one another, even as each sought in the other a desirable fashion accessory. Yet it is undoubtedly the case that Linda's millions brought Porter a far greater social prominence than he might have achieved on his own, along with a constant supply of houses, cars, swimming pools, and handsome young masseurs. And he had plenty of dough—his and hers—left over for "snow," the high-grade cocaine that he was wont to snort between glasses of champagne and frenetic spells at the piano.

Also palpable in "I'm a Gigolo," however, is the narrator's chilly awareness of his own monstrosity. He is unnatural (a flower that blooms in the winter), motherless, sexually abject. When he looks at himself in the mirror, after a night of fulsome labors, he seems to ape, grotesquely, a host of female mirror-scenes in European literature and art: the bemused looking-glass gaze of the Rokeby Venus; the glance of self-appraisal that the heroine Belinda casts upon herself as she completes her toilette in the opening verses of *The Rape of the Lock*; the Marschallin's poignant self-inspection, in the famous scene in *Der Rosenkavalier*, in which she realizes that she is growing old and will inevitably lose her handsome young lover. When Porter's narrator looks in the mirror, however, there is nothing human to be seen—no man nor woman either—just a petted, peripheral, and hybrid thing: halfway to human, but always falling short.

As the song, so the man. Even in the somewhat occluded version provided by McBrien, Porter's life story reveals a spirit haunted by a comparable sense of incompleteness, superfluity, and marginality. "I'm a toy balloon that's fated soon to pop," goes one of Porter's most celebrated lyrics, and he went about life with the brittle compulsiveness of one fundamentally unsure of his place in the world. The

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malaise seems to have been established early on.

Porter's childhood was pampered, but a possessive mother and distant father set up a contradictory rhythm in his soul. His mother, "the Great Katie," doted on him, and would treat him as her personal emotional appendage until her death at ninety in 1952. In painful contrast, his father, a stolid Midwestern businessman, seemed altogether unmoved by his son's obvious, if forward, gifts. (Watching a silent film at the cinema at the age of eight, the pixieish Porter climbed uninvited onto the stage during a melodramatic scene and played a bouncy honky-tonk number on the stage piano until he was ejected.) After being packed off to boarding school in Worcester, Massachusetts, in 1905, Porter had little to do with his father, who died in 1927, having never, it seems, gotten the point. The bored, jaded, too-tired-to-be-bothered speakers who inhabit so many of Porter's songs may owe something to Sam Porter's killing lack of interest in his strange yet musically prodigious offspring.

Porter tried to resolve the psychic unease of family life through performance—by turning himself, indeed, into the life of the party. From adolescence onward he was attracted by loud, boisterous groups and attached himself to them with antic sociability. He had begun performing in public as a child: his summer job, in his teens, was singing and playing the piano on a steamship that plied the waters of Lake Maxinkuckee, a resort near his home in Peru. (Later in life, one of Porter's friends advanced the curious theory that the exaggerated, even clumsy piano rhythms found in Porter's recordings of his own songs—the right hand in his 1934 version of "You're the Top" is positively hiccupy in its syncopation—came from the fact that he learned to project his songs to the accompaniment of pounding steamship engines.)

At Yale, where he matriculated in 1909, Porter studied little—preferring instead to produce college theatricals, to frolic with the cheerleading squad, and to concoct fizzy pep songs for the football team. However risible or camp, the very titles of his songs from this period bespeak a yearning for corporate acceptance and connection—"I Want to Be a Yale Boy," "If I Were Only a Football Man," "I Want to Be Married (To a Delta Kappa Epsilon Man)." To be at the center of things, even if it meant serving as boy-mascot or male cocotte, was to feel part of a living and breathing human enterprise.

The same impulses animated him as he moved forward into the most volatile and momentous period of his life. After graduation from Yale and an unsuccessful stint at Harvard Law School (his father had hoped he would go into mining or farming), he occupied himself with party-going, jaunts to Europe, and writing amateur musical revues for the Yale Dramatic Association. In 1916, at the suggestion of the pioneering Broadway producer Bessie Marbury, who had recognized his budding talents, he collaborated on his first full-scale musical, the now-obscure *See America First*. Despite droll song lyrics reminiscent of Gilbert and Sullivan—an obvious and early influence on Porter—the show closed after fifteen performances. Soon after this humiliation—the critics had written "Don't see *America First*"—Porter decamped for France, then in the throes of war, as a soldier-volunteer.

Legend has it that Porter served during World War I in the French Foreign Legion, though his new biographer suggests that whatever army service he actually performed (he seems to have worked mainly for a Franco-American relief agency) was hardly onerous. And even before he was out of uniform Porter was making the rounds of cafés, supper clubs, and Parisian drawing-rooms, using his piano-playing as an entrée into fashionable society. After the Armistice, marriage to Linda, and on into the mid-1920s, he continued this somewhat feckless existence, shuttling back and forth between Paris and the Lido in Venice, where he was part of a fast-living set that included the celebrated decorator Elsie de Wolfe (later Lady Mendl), Gerald and Sara Murphy, the Princess di San Faustino, Diana Vreeland, Consuelo Vanderbilt, the actor Monty Woolley, the black cabaret singer Bricktop, and the bizarre Elsa Maxwell—an obese, mustachioed lesbian from California who parlayed a brazen skill for social climbing, party organizing, and gossip-mongering into fortune and fame as a society columnist and a lifelong celebrity-chaser.

After contributing songs to various revues in London and New York, Porter had his first big break in 1928 with the "musi-comedy" *Paris*, starring Irene Bordoni. Critics went gaga, and the show's celebrated signature tune, "Let's Do It, Let's Fall in Love," became a smash hit. (The latter—in which centipedes, kangaroos, schools of cod, guinea pigs, giraffes, and "pekineses at the Ritz" all "do it" with aplomb—was the first in a series of what one critic later dubbed Porter's "habits of rabbits" songs.)

Over the next decade this starry triumph was repeated many times, as Porter tossed off a string of masterpieces for various hit shows in London and on Broadway: "Let's Misbehave," "Looking at You," "What Is This Thing Called Love?" (*Wake Up and Dream*, 1929); "You Do Something to Me" (*Fifty Million Frenchmen*, 1929); "I'm Getting Myself Ready for You," "Love for Sale" (*The New Yorkers*, 1930); "After You, Who?" "Night and Day" (*The Gay Divorce*, 1932); "I Get a Kick Out of You," "All Through the Night," "You're the Top," "Anything Goes" (*Anything Goes*, 1934); "Don't Fence Me In" (*Adios, Argentina*, 1934-35); "When Love Comes Your Way," "Begin the Beguine," "Just One of Those Things" (*Jubilee*, 1935); "Easy to Love," "I've Got You Under My Skin" (*Born to Dance*, 1936); "Down in the Depths," "It's De-Lovely" (*Red, Hot and Blue*, 1936); "In the Still of the Night" (*Rosalie*, 1937); "Get Out of Town," "My Heart Belongs to Daddy" (*Leave It to Me*, 1938); "I Concentrate on You" (*Broadway Melody of 1940*, 1939).

In 1937, with rumors of a European war intensifying, the Porters sold the lavish apartment in Paris where they had lived for over a decade and moved back to New York. Porter threw himself again into non-stop composing and socializing. Following his terrible horse-riding accident—he would undergo thirty operations on his legs before finally submitting to the amputation of his right leg in 1958—his creative pace slackened slightly, but only temporarily. Within a few months he was back at the piano, producing songs for *Du Barry Was a Lady* (1939), *Panama Hattie* (1940), *You'll Never Get Rich* and *Let's Face It*

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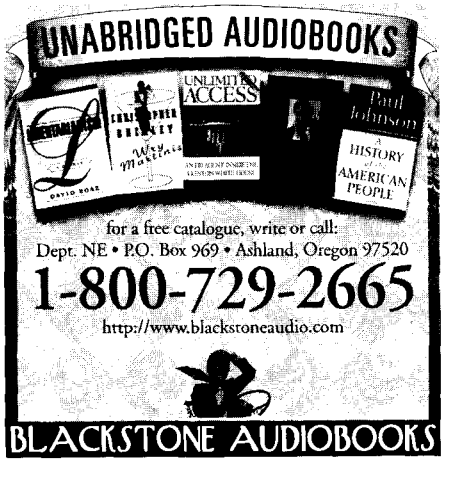

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(1941), and *Something for the Boys* (1943). He continued to write for musicals into the 1950s. The late yet still ebullient *Kiss Me, Kate*, which Auden thought superior to the work on which it was based—Shakespeare's *The Taming of the Shrew*—was in fact Porter's greatest box-office success, running for 1,077 performances between 1948 and 1951.

Starting in the early 1940s Porter also worked in Hollywood, composing scores for films such as *Something to Shout About* (1943), *The Pirate* (1948), and *High Society* (1956). Hollywood, in the form of Jack Warner, repaid the compliment by making *Night and Day* (1946), a stilted, fanciful, and utterly mawkish biopic about him, starring Cary Grant and Alexis Smith. The timing of this sentimental fable could hardly have been more ironic. Even as the film idealized the cozy domestic life of Cole and Linda, the principals (who spent most of their time apart anyway) were now permanently estranged and living in separate residences: Porter in Los Angeles, where he presided over weekly pool-and-sex parties for young actors and off-duty servicemen at his house on Rockingham Drive, Linda in New York, where she was spending increasing amounts of time—on account of her worsening emphysema—in an iron lung at the Waldorf. Out of this she would clamber periodically in order to smoke cigarettes, drink martinis, and have her gowns fitted by Main Bocher.

Porter's last years were sad. The neurotic desire to be surrounded by others never left him. He had the means to make such conviviality possible, of course: "Porter always paid for sex," one friend reported after his death. And he continued to have poolside dinner parties for eight almost nightly, complete with Baccarat crystal and a servant with a flit gun to ward off insects. But age, poor health, and incorrigible alcoholism took their toll. In 1950 he became convinced, irrationally, that he had lost all his money, and he underwent electric shock treatments for depression and paranoid delusions. Linda, increasingly ill, died in 1954, leaving him morose and guilty. The composer retreated further into drink and various kinds of obsessive-compulsive behavior.

After the amputation of his leg in 1958 Porter lamented that he was "only half a man," but he spent much of his time narcissistically browning himself under a tanning machine. Nor was this his only Aschenbach-like regimen: he also dyed his hair, had his body hair shaved every week, and regularly applied witch-hazel potions to his eyelids to keep his skin youthful-looking. A buxom masseur named Richard tended to these and other tasks behind closed doors.

Porter's end was piteous and squalid. When, in the early 1960s, the now-incontinent composer was unable to find anyone to spend weekends with him, he would insist that his butler Burke pretend to be his guest, even while continuing to wait on him. Thus the embarrassed factotum, writes McBrien, "would alternate between serving Cole his meals as an employee and then joining him at the dining table as his guest." Ultimately dinner itself became a mere charade. At Porter's death in 1964, after surgery to remove a kidney stone, he was indeed only half a man: due to malnutrition and alcohol poisoning, his weight had dropped to eighty pounds. He literally shriveled up. His last request after the operation was that a friend go to his house and destroy his collection of pornographic photographs.

What to do with such a rebarbative—and often uncanny—personality? One might be tempted to search for Porter's absent humanity in his oeuvre, were it not, at first glance, so inhumanly good. A Shakespearean fluency of output (he wrote over eight hundred songs), combined with seemingly miraculous lyric and melodic gifts, set him oddly apart from composing contemporaries—even such profound talents as Irving Berlin, Jerome Kern, Lorenz Hart, and Billy Strayhorn. At times his songs can seem almost too clever, too inevitable, too delectably right in their eerie fusion of word and musical accompaniment. We seem to be in the presence of a kind of song-writing magus.

Contemporaries marveled at the ease with which Porter composed. A host of legends or "creation myths" (usually apocryphal) sprang up around his most popular lyrics. He is supposed to have written "Night and Day" one rainy weekend at Newport, after his hostess, Mrs. Vincent Astor, remarked during a lunchtime downpour, "I must have that eave mended at once. That drip, drip, drip is driving me mad"—thus prompting the song's famous repeated-note opening, "Like the drip, drip, drip of the raindrops." The inspiration for "You're the Top" is said to have come when Porter and Mrs. Alistair Mackintosh began making up a list of rhyming comic superlatives during dinner at Boeuf sur le Toit. And Joan Fontaine always claimed that she was in on the epiphanic moment that led to "Don't Fence Me In": overhearing Porter on the phone with his wife, she remembered him suddenly saying, "Linda, please don't fence me in." (Porter's women friends, interestingly, are often involved in these origin-myths, functioning like traditional muses or handmaidens of genius.) To admiring acquaintances Porter seemed indeed a kind of necromancer or alchemist, able to turn the dross of everyday chit-chat into the gold of art.

Nor are such tales of fantastical creativity entirely off the mark. There can be no mistaking the dashing sublimity of Porter's gift. The lyrics of his songs alone might qualify him for a place in the pantheon—in the burnished satiric tradition of English poets such as Dryden, Pope, and Byron. Like the great versifiers of the Restoration and the early eighteenth century (not to mention the madcap lord), Porter endowed a compulsive verbal facetious-

The first Christians effaced the historical Jesus, mythicizing him and doctoring his teachings through writing, selecting, editing, and finally canonizing a sacred literature; critical New Testament study confirms this. But now, maybe, the historical Jesus is recoverable by means of the *Thomas* document unearthed in 1945, which claims to be enigmatic sayings of Jesus jotted down by a disciple journeying with Jesus. This claim is validated by Jack Hannah in ***You Will Not Taste Death—Jesus and Epicureanism*** through fitting the sayings chronologically with the historical framework of Mark's Gospel. Hannah then analyzes all 113 sayings: showing them to be free of early Christian contrivances, developing a new historical narrative, and demonstrating that in fact Jesus was oriented toward Epicureanism—the most materialistic, scientific, and anti-superstitious of all Hellenistic philosophies. The historical Jesus had a more realistic ontology and ethic than what his successors devised. Hannah's findings challenge the academic presupposition that Jesus taught within the theistic and messianic bounds of Judaism. This seminal, radical, 321pp.pbk. is $12 postpd. Order from:

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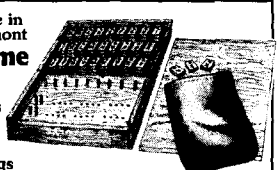

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ness—wrenched rhymes, incongruous syntactical and semantic juxtapositions, comic enjambements—with a ribald yet coruscating glory:

> In olden days, a glimpse of stocking
> Was looked on as something shocking,
> But now, God knows,
> Anything goes.
> Good authors too who once knew
> better words
> Now only use four-letter words
> Writing prose,
> Anything goes.
> If driving fast cars you like,
> If low bars you like,
> If old hymns you like,
> If bare limbs you like,
> If Mae West you like,
> Or me undressed you like,
> Why, nobody will oppose.
> When ev'ry night, the set that's smart is intruding in nudist parties in
> Studios,
> Anything goes.

As in *The Dunciad* or *Don Juan*, celebrities of the day (usually the composer's friends) appear as characters in his verses, transmogrified into mock-heroic actors in a spry pageant of folly and caprice:

> Farming, that's the fashion,
> Farming, that's the passion
> Of our great celebrities of today.
> Fannie Hurst is haulin' logs,
> Fanny Brice is feedin' hogs,
> Garbo-Peep has led her sheep all astray.
> Singing while they're rakin',
> Bringing home the bacon,
> Makes 'em feel more glamorous
> and more gay.
> Miss Elsa Maxwell, so the folks tattle,
> Got well-goosed while dehorning her cattle
> Farming is so charming, they all say.

To be sure, Porter's satire was always light. Apart from keeping up a general assault on sexual prudery (numerous lyrics in his shows, such as "Love for Sale," had to be changed or dropped at the demand of censors), he never bothered with larger social or political issues. Still, there is depth there nonetheless, hauntingly so; and when he veers toward melancholy, as in many of the classic ballads, no songwriter of the past one hundred years is more adept at evoking, by lyric alone, what Pope once called the moving toyshop of the heart:

> In the roaring traffic's
> boom,
> In the silence of my
> lonely room,
> I think of you, night
> and day.

Porter's tunes have if anything an even greater stand-alone power: witness seventy years of gorgeous appropriations by jazz instrumentalists as varied as Lester Young, Django Reinhardt, Charlie Parker, Lee Konitz, John Coltrane, and Cecil Taylor. (Parker used the erotically throbbing minor chords of "What Is This Thing Called Love?" in both "Hot House" and "Fats Flats.") From the start Porter's admirers were wont to compare his unusual harmonic language and unexpected melodic turns with those of Schubert, Schumann, and other masters of the nineteenth-century *lied*. "So in Love," wrote one critic, "is as neatly worked out as a *lied*: Far from being in the 32-bar mold that marks most 'hits,' its melody extends itself and glides to an end in a way that only an artist could manage." The composer and conductor Leo Smit thought the startling intervals and circuitous musical line of "Night and Day" reminiscent of Schumann's "The Lotus Flower."

Yet it is unquestionably in the dazzling conjunction of lyric and melody that Porter's ineffability lies. And here the most apt comparison might be with great masters from the late seventeenth and eighteenth centuries—with Purcell, Handel, and the magnificent word-setters of the High Baroque. In "I Get a Kick Out of You"—

> I get no kick in a plane.
> Flying too high with some guy in the sky
> Is my idea of nothing to do,
> Yet I get a kick out of you.

—the melody climbs vertiginously upward as the lyric begins its own dizzying ascent on the word "flying." And such mannerist interplay between lyric and melos is everywhere in the songs. It is in the exquisite "Love for Sale," in which the sound of slowing footsteps in the opening recitative—

> When the only sound in the empty street
> Is the heavy tread of the heavy feet
> That belong to a lonesome cop

—is mimicked in the spare and ponderous melody to which the lines are set; and in "Just One of Those Things," where a madly propulsive, hell-for-bent tune seems to underscore the singer's urge to break free from the sexual snares in which he or she is entangled; and in the astonishingly beautiful "Ev'ry Time We Say Goodbye," when the singer intones the famous lyric—

> There's no love song finer
> But how strange
> The change
> From major to minor

—and Porter's melody does exactly that. Word and music fall exquisitely together, like figments of a dream, even as Porter himself comes to seem more unfathomable and Puck-like: a weird little Jazz Age daemon, with martini glass in hand and genius to spare.

William McBrien does little, unfortunately, to humanize Porter or to make

Reliquary

You want to leave it
when the moon is full,
the land laid out in parcels
field by field and forest edge.

In increments
your vision sets in silver.
For days this lot—the land,
the light, illuminated snow—

has held you in its scope,
your eyes dilated to its sheen,
your gilt-edged footprints
ringed like pilfered coins.

But now each field you pass
devolves into an image,
the atrophy of retrospect
advancing sight unseen.

No sleight here, only
the long light in the trees
that ceases to live
as you leave it behind.

There is no looking back.
Only your future sways—
familiar clutter, unrefined.
Your windfall will be rotting in the grass.

Give yourself up to the sign
hanging at the side of the road
and all its attendant excess.
Spin the balance of your mind until it rests.

You will not keep more than this,
the final measure of the property
all unadorned, your own—
the ephemera that will not exit with you.

Melanie Rehak

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him seem less strange and doll-like. This is not for want of confidence. "Was it Hippolyte Taine who said success in writing came from a felicitous conjunction of *l'homme, moment, et milieu*?" McBrien asks in his opening acknowledgments. "I believe, as do my publishers, that this book represents such a conjunction." But the result belies such authorial *amour-propre*. Despite having had the blessing of the Porter estate and access to various new archives, McBrien cannot be said to have produced a satisfying book. The story that he tells is often confused and elliptical. The narrative of Porter's courtship of Linda (if so calculated an enterprise may be called that) is related in clumsy fits and starts; Porter's nervous breakdown in the 1950s is passed over, mystifyingly, in a paragraph or two.

The charged subject of the composer's homosexuality enters, as it were, entirely through the back door, when McBrien, having said nothing at all to prepare the ground, shifts abruptly from a discussion of Porter's marriage to a gossipy account of his 1925 affair with the poet Boris Kochno, régisseur for Diaghilev's Ballets Russes. No explanation is forthcoming for this turn of events—no reference backward, say, to adolescent experiments; nor does McBrien ever manage to put Porter's sexuality into any coherent psychological or historical context. Major loves—Kochno, the architect Ed Tauch, the dancer Nelson Barclift, the actor Robert Bray (who later played the forest-ranger father on television's "Lassie")—remain largely ciphers, part of a depressing parade of big-legged hunks who seem entirely without charm or inner lives of their own.

Still more off-putting is McBrien's tone, which oscillates between the dire *savoir faire* of the small-town college professor ("the couplet is proof that Porter was *au fait* with the world of Diaghilev") and a kind of gossip-columnist fatuousness when he is simply overcome by the fabulosity of it all: "The languorous Venetian summer of 1926 was punctuated by the arrival of many guests: Dorothy Oelrichs, wife of Herman, his friend from Yale; Dorothy 'Dickie' Fellowes-Gordon; Noel Coward and his lover, John C. 'Jack' Wilson; Lady Abdy; the Duke of Verdura; Monty Woolley; Lady Diana Cooper; Jean Bouvier; the Mendls; Countess de Frasso; and Countess di Zoppola (the former Edith Mortimer)." Dickie! Lady Abdy! The former Edith Mortimer! Well, did you evah!

How to turn a gigolo back into a human being? Perhaps no biography will ever make Porter seem other than a wintry flower. Still, just as the fading beauty is restored (if briefly) to a sense of life and vibrancy in the gigolo's presence, so Porter, one might argue, has been humanized by his performers—by those who have infused his songs with their own breath, flesh, and blood. Porter's most humanizing talent, paradoxically, was his power to make others human: by giving them songs so perfect—so luminous, forgiving, fateful, and profound—that they have had no choice, whatever their individual technical or moral resources, but to sound more fully alive in the singing and the playing of them. Performers typically surpass themselves when singing Porter. To listen to Ethel Merman, usually maligned as an unsubtle belter, delicately wend her way through "I Get a Kick Out of You" on a 1934 recording with Johnny Green and his Orchestra is to hear a mistress of sensuous phrasing, as elegant, subtle, and seductive as Madame de Maintenon.

Is there any more joyful human legacy of our otherwise ghastly waning century than the magnificent cornucopia of Porter performances now surviving on record and compact disc? One has one's private touchstones, of course: Libby Holman's wild, moonstruck vibrato in "Love for Sale"; Mabel Mercer's epicene goofing on "Where Oh Where" and "Ace in the Hole"; Julie Wilson's cigarette-ravaged versions of "My Heart Belongs to Daddy" and "Easy to Love"; Chet Baker's intoning "Ev'ry Time We Say Goodbye" as if exuding beautiful amber. Nor have Porter's tunes been entirely coopted by the nostalgia industry: one of the most telling musical enterprises of the 1980s was *Red, Hot, and Blue*, a collection of Porter classics performed by Annie Lennox, Salif Keita, the Pogues, Iggy Pop, the Cocteau Twins, and other rock icons. In the context of a plague-ridden postmodernity—profits from the sale of the recording went to AIDS research—songs such as "I've Got You Under My Skin" took on new and ever more poignant resonances.

In this warm and engaged munificence, the living, pulsing breath of those who sing him, Porter himself lives on—far more than in lyric sheet or photograph or indeed life story, especially one as disappointing as McBrien's. Only there, perhaps, do we find the human face in the mirror, the gigolo with a day job, the manikin with a soul and a tiny, beating heart. He's a Popeye, he's a panic, he's a pip—but he's also strangely de-lovely.

TERRY CASTLE is Professor of English at Stanford University and the author of *Noel Coward and Radclyffe Hall: Kindred Spirits* (Columbia University Press).

Virtue's Skin

BY ALAN WOLFE

The African American Book of Values: Classic Moral Stories edited and with commentary by Steven Barboza

(Doubleday, 939 pp., $29.95)

In *Cloudsplitter*, his fictional narrative of the life of John Brown, Russell Banks tells the story of the time Brown wrote an essay called "Sambo's Mistakes," which he sent to a Negro journal. It was rejected, Brown's son Owen tells us, "probably because it was seen for what it was—a white man in blackface telling Negroes how to behave." Owen is aghast at his father's racial insensitivity, but Brown defends himself. "You see," he tells his son, "American Negroes don't have a figure like Benjamin Franklin, and that's what I'm trying to establish here. A friendly, wise scold. Franklin spoke only to white people, wisely and well, to be sure, but what he said is of little use to people despised and downtrodden because of their race.... Negroes—I'm talking about the rank and file here, you understand, not the leaders—they need a book of practical wisdom which is as accessible and amusing to them as Franklin's is to us whites, and as down-to-earth."

"Fine," Owen responds. "But why not let a Negro man write such a book?" Now one has. Steven Barboza, a journalist, has actually assembled, not written, the book that Owen wanted to see; but *The African American Book of Values* is everything that John Brown did not believe Negroes capable of writing. Barboza's collection proves Banks's Brown wrong in two ways. First, African Ameri-

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cans have had more than their share of Benjamin Franklins; Barboza has dug deeply and come up with wonderfully chosen people and tales that illustrate the virtues in ways brimming with "practical wisdom." And second, these tales prove, somewhat unwittingly, that when it comes to lessons in morality, a white man like Franklin could speak to blacks with as much wisdom and relevance as the black writers assembled by Barboza can speak to whites. There are many races in America, but all of them belong to the human race. As they search for guidance about right and wrong, courage and conviction, and fidelity and faith, blacks and whites will inevitably appeal to the same universal standards of dignity.

There is one difference between this collection of moral tales assembled primarily for African Americans and its obvious model, William Bennett's *The Book of Virtues*. Barboza prefers the vacuous term "values" to the more threatening term "virtues," as if determined to avoid even the appearance of suggesting that communities that have had more than their share of out-of-wedlock births or epidemics of drug abuse might have benefited from a bit more appreciation for classical ideals about virtue.

And, truth be told, Barboza does not intend his tales to be preachy. John Brown, in Russell Banks's imagination, thought African Americans needed a "scold." If so, they will not find one here. *The African American Book of Values* is celebratory in its appreciation of the black experience. We have inspiring tales of valor, professions of faith, declarations of love, paeans to work, homilies to loyalty, but we do not have, at least explicitly, advice about what to do when values conflict or are demonstrably abused. One wants a bit more realism from Barboza, some sense that life is tragic as well as joyous, let alone an appreciation for how often we may fail to live up to the ideals we profess.

Barboza's triumphalism also underscores, if inadvertently, the universality of the conditions that he depicts. For no individual and no race has ever been able to practice the virtues—or even the values—that they preach. The section of Barboza's tome that best illustrates why the pursuit of even the right "values" is never as easy as it at first seems is the one dealing with honesty. Here one finds an aphorism from Carter G. Woodson ("truth could move multitudes with untutored language"), a poem, "Speak the Truth to the People," by Mari Evans, various homilies from various writers, a short story by Chester Himes, a selection from Frederick Douglass, another poem by Andy Razaf, and other wisdom to the effect that honesty is the best policy. Barboza frames the selections with an introduction stressing that "to destroy myths about their supposed inferiority, blacks armed themselves with historical facts about black accomplishments and the truth about blacks' capabilities and capacity for greatness."

But does black subjugation mean that blacks have a special affinity with honesty not possessed by any other group? Is there a distinct form taken by black truth that would be different from any other form of truth? Of course not. This is why Barboza also writes that "for African Americans, as for others, the truth has served as a shield against lies." Those others, one presumes, include just about everyone else in the world.

And the story does not end there, for some of these tales convey the exact opposite message from the one attributed to Aretha Franklin: "Soul is honesty." Is a slave under an obligation to tell the truth to his master? Frederick Douglass certainly did not think so. Under slavery, he wrote, there is a "penalty" for being honest, and it is not always a penalty that slaves should agree to pay. Masters had a habit of sending spies out into the field, and when slaves, in the face of that tactic, dissemble, Douglass wrote, "they suppress the truth rather than take the consequences of telling it, and in so doing prove themselves a part of the human family."

Why, under such circumstances, does dishonesty qualify one for membership in the human race? Because the slave who refuses to tell the truth faces a conflict between competing moral rules: that honesty is always virtuous and that one should be loyal to one's fellows in suffering. Moral philosophers since Augustine have wrestled with the question of when and if it is proper to lie, a dialogue to which Douglass brings a refreshing realism. The experience of slavery, he suggests, reinforces in dramatic form a dilemma of the human, not the black, condition: the virtuous person is not the one who follows a rule, but the one who understands which rule to follow.

There is not a single subject in Barboza's book that does not pose, in much the same way as honesty, the tentative, problematic, and always uncertain nature of virtue. Self-esteem ought to be welcomed, and who cannot love the form it takes in these words of Zora Neale Hurston: "How *can* any deny themselves the pleasure of my company! It's beyond me"? But if we ought to be proud of our accomplishments, not only as individuals but also as members of the groups to which we belong, should we not also appreciate the virtue of modesty—and therefore avoid the vice of conceit?

No account of the virtues is complete without a corresponding account of the vices. Consider the subject of courage, in the best section of Barboza's book. Illustrating his message with extraordinary tales of human bravery in the face of slavery, Barboza demonstrates why we admire people who take great risks; but we would not want the virtue of courage—especially when, as in the case of slavery, the lives of innocent people are in danger—to transform itself into the vice of foolhardiness.

Since Barboza approaches vice tentatively, the reader often has to supply the balance missing in the way the moral tales in this book are assembled. Thus one part of *The African American Book of Values* deals with compassion, where we learn, through the eyes of remarkable people such as the surgeons Daniel Hale Williams and Ben Carson or Clara McBride ("Mother") Hale, who began raising babies born to drug addicts at the age of sixty-five, about the power of empathy, the capacity to do good for others even at risk to one's own welfare. In another part of the book, through the poetry of Paul Laurence Dunbar and the aphorisms of LeRoy (Satchel) Paige, Barboza examines the importance of self-discipline, the ability to keep one's emotions under control even when provoked. While a certain amount of self-discipline may be essential for compassion, the coolness of the one inevitably conflicts with the overflowing emotionalism of the other. Read these chapters separately and the message is simplistic: we should all aspire to do the right thing. Read them together and it becomes clear: we rarely can know what is the right thing to do. That is why a book that tells its readers that there is usually only one right way to act—and then further suggests, through its selection of moral heroes, that some people have indeed acted the right way—unintentionally reinforces the actual truths of the matter, which are that none of us have a monopoly on virtue, and that, even if we did, we can follow its dictates and wind up undercutting its importance.

The African American Book of Values has one other unintended virtue: it brings to the attention of readers who may not be familiar with them the writings of a large, diverse, and consistently interesting group of African Americans. Many of the names collected in this book are already well known to readers black and white: Gordon Parks, Langston Hughes, Terry McMillan, Dorothy

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West, Alex Haley, W.E.B. DuBois. Others—such as the slaves William and Ellen Craft, who escaped by pretending to be a master and slave—ought to be enshrined in any pantheon of courage. I did not know until I read this book about Ann Lowe, one of this century's most respected fashion designers, nor that the expression "the real McCoy" came from the inventions of a former slave. Barboza takes great pride in his race and shares that sense of pride with his readers.

But this pride raises an indelicate question. For whom was this book assembled? If Barboza is trying to instill pride among readers of his own race, which is certainly how he frames his introductions to all his chapters, this seems an odd objective. Either African Americans are as accomplished in their pursuit of the virtues as his book insists, or they are not. If they are, then black readers will not need the instruction that he offers. And if they are not, then more preachiness and less celebration would seem to be in order. By stressing the positive, Barboza raises the unanswerable question of why a people whose values are presumably so much a part of their experience would need a volume whose intent is to remind them of their values.

Of course it may be that Barboza is also trying to persuade whites that, contrary to their perhaps negative impressions of African Americans, blacks in this country not only have strong values, but also take them very seriously. This is certainly an important objective, but it comes into conflict with Barboza's "insider" tone, as if this book is meant to be a conversation among blacks from which whites can hope to gain little. Yet if black readers can be expected to be more familiar with the stories and people assembled here, white readers, who may, as in my case, be less familiar with them, have more to gain from the exposure to them which Barboza offers.

When it comes to moral tales, neither John Brown nor Owen Brown got it quite right. John Brown's certainty that he could offer instruction to another race about the right way to behave in ways that no member of that race could do is patronizing in the extreme. But Owen Brown's insistence that this is a job for black Americans is true only once. Now that Steven Barboza has put this valuable book together, it is no longer necessary to segregate either its contributors or its readers. We now know, thanks to Barboza, what "African American values" are; and they turn out to be the same values by which everybody tries to live, and by which almost nobody actually lives. •

TRB *continued from page 6*

grumbling in the ranks about Clinton's misconduct. It clashes with the lofty notions of "duty, honor, country" that military officers absorb in their training. Clinton's affairs especially rankle at a time when many military officers have had their careers ruined over similar peccadilloes. And the whole sorry scandal just seems to confirm what many culturally and politically conservative military types have always believed about the First Draft Evader's lack of character.

Intuitively, their beefs are both easy to understand and easy to agree with. But, if there's a worse reason for removing an elected president from office than unrest in the military, I can't think of it. That's the way they used to run things in places like El Salvador and Honduras. Yet Representative Bill McCollum of Florida seemed practically to offer the military a veto over the results of presidential elections. He asked Edney if the committee would be "undermining" good order and discipline "if we didn't impeach the president of the United States if he is guilty of these crimes?" Edney, to his credit, didn't dignify this multiple hypothetical with a "yes." Still, McCollum's question itself, coupled with the mere fact that military officers (albeit retired ones) were asked to advise Congress on such a fateful political question, was a blow to the current military leadership's efforts to *preserve* good order and discipline by showing zero tolerance for Clinton-bashing in the ranks. It was also an offense to the basic principle of civilian control over the Armed Forces.

This solemn hearing on matters of the utmost constitutional importance began with Chairman Hyde's observation that members of the committee were still "straggling in." As the afternoon wore on, another expert witness, Professor Stephen Saltzburg of George Washington University Law School, was heard to remind the chair that "a couple of us have to leave at five." (Bet Ken Starr wishes he could have invoked that privilege during his grillathon before the committee.) Only Dershowitz never seemed to flag: "I did not engage in diatribes against this committee. I responded to a point made by the chairman, characterizing my remarks, which he did not hear. And I responded to a specific allegation made in a single instance, and I stick by what I said." You get the feeling that, like Starr, he would have been willing to go on all night—or at least until it was time to do "Larry King Live."

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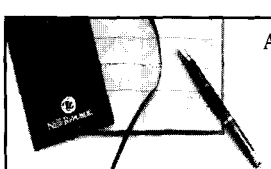

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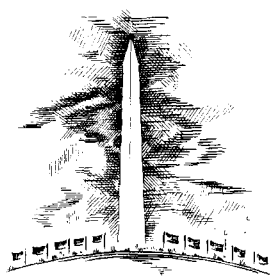
WASHINGTON DIARIST

Unqualified opinions

ALTHOUGH THE SENATE REBUFFED James Hormel's nomination for ambassador to Luxembourg this fall, it was not, conservatives assure us, because he is gay. If Hormel were the sort of homosexual who went about his gayness discreetly, Republicans would welcome him with open arms or, at least, with firm, manly handshakes. The trouble seems to be that Hormel, as Senator John Ashcroft put it, "has been a leader in promoting a lifestyle." But what does this have to do with his qualifications as ambassador? It cannot mean that Hormel's lifestyle leadership would offend Luxembourg—after all, Luxembourg's ambassador to the United States has endorsed the selection of Hormel. The danger, then, can only be the opposite, that Hormel would actually win converts. And here's where I fail to understand the GOP's calculation. If they affirm his nomination, their absolute worst case scenario would be that Hormel would somehow use his post to persuade the entire population of Luxembourg to become gay—a development that few religious conservatives here would even notice. On the other hand, by making Hormel a martyr, Republicans have handed the gay rights lobby invaluable propaganda with which to raise money for its recruitment efforts here in the United States. So the religious right has sacrificed this country's moral fiber for the benefit of a few ungrateful foreigners! Somebody tell Pat Buchanan.

EARLIER THIS YEAR, THE UNIVERsity of Michigan put up a plaque and named a room in honor of Carl Cohen, a former professor of mine who founded the university's Residential College 31 years ago. The dedication created an uproar among certain students because Cohen also happens to be the leading critic of the university's system of racial preferences in admissions. So the university removed the plaque and de-named the room, but not because Cohen opposes racial preferences. The problem, rather, is that Cohen promotes a colorblind lifestyle.... No, wait, that's not it. Ah, yes. It's that there was some sort of procedural irregularity in the dedication of the room. As Tom Weisskopf, the director of the Residential College, told the *Detroit Free Press*, "My decision was made after discovering the extent to which procedures had been violated." Weisskopf's words imply a certain helplessness: he did not make the decision; the decision "was made." Apparently these bureaucratic snafus are intractable—the administration has told Cohen to forget about his room.

A COUPLE OF YEARS AGO, RESearchers at Kent State University conducted a study on human vocal patterns. They contended that people change their low-frequency tones when speaking to listeners of higher social status. *The Washington Post* gave the study major play, noting only in passing two seemingly significant problems with the experiment. The first flaw was that it tested the utterances of just one person. The second was that the one person was Larry King—a methodological shortcoming akin to drawing conclusions about human aggression based on data obtained from Mike Tyson. James Stewart makes a similar error—generalizing from one highly unrepresentative example—in his new book *Follow the Story*, a text on the art of journalism. Stewart waxes romantic about all forms of journalism save opinion writing, which he disdains. Stewart's distrust of polemicists derives from his belief that the world is divided between fact people and opinion people. The latter "tend to hold strong opinions and judgments and seek facts to confirm them" and "are capable of ignoring or rationalizing conflicting information." Given that this is the opposite of how opinion writers should work, why does Stewart believe that all editorialists think this way? The mystery unravels a page later, as Stewart recounts his formative experience. In a decade as a news editor at *The Wall Street Journal*, he encountered editorial writers who would "drive fact people crazy. They ignored contradictory evidence. They rarely, and then only grudgingly, conceded error." Aha. What Stewart mistakes for a norm is actually an intellectual disorder manifested in particularly extreme form on the *Journal*'s opinion page. Of course, it's hard to fault Stewart for this. I'm not sure anyone could keep a level head about opinion journalism after ten years of continuous exposure to Bob Bartley and his minions.



DELVE TOO DEEPLY INTO THE mentality of the deranged, and it begins to seem normal. My morbid obsession with the *Journal* editorial page may one day rob me of my sanity, yet I persist in it nonetheless. As with all arts, the fascination of *Journal*-watching lies in the details. In 1993, the *Journal* predicted that President Clinton's small tax hike would bring about economic Armageddon. While never acknowledging that they made this claim, the editors have since taken to explaining how the ensuing prosperity was all due to the subsequent GOP takeover. Lest they paint themselves into a corner again, though, they have left an out: "Whatever Bill Clinton's contribution to recent economic success, in short, the current threat to prosperity is unequivocally his responsibility." In other words, any conceivable outcome will prove the *Journal*'s point. It takes a singularly devious mind to construct this kind of nonfalsifiable argument in advance. But, aside from obsessives like me, not too many people notice such perfidy—probably because the editors do such a good job of cloaking it with charts, jargon, and other accoutrements of intellectual respectability.

CONSIDER, AS ONE EXAMPLE, A recent op-ed titled, "TAX THE RICH? IT CAN'T BE DONE." (While most newspapers use the op-ed page to counterbalance the editorials, the *Journal* generally uses it to augment them.) The author, Charles Kadlec, does not simply make the familiar supply-side argument that taxing the rich will tank the economy. Instead, he argues that doing so is a practical impossibility; if you raise taxes on the wealthy, they will pass the cost on to the middle class and poor. He explains this by reference to his dentist: "When the top personal income tax rates were increased under President Bush, and then again under President Clinton, I noticed that the fees my dentist charged went up about enough to cover the higher tax on my dentist's income." So, even though the government tries to raise taxes on wealthy dentists, "their customers are the ones paying for those higher tax rates." The article sports a nifty graph, and it looks reasonable enough; but this is sheer quackery. Let's assume that Kadlec somehow knows his dentist's earnings, tax liability, and profit margin. He seems to believe that prices are set not by market forces but by the salary requirements of dentists. The mind-blowing thing is that Kadlec is the managing director of an investment firm. So he's qualified to control people's life savings—yet James Hormel can't have his ambassadorship, and Carl Cohen can't have his room.

JONATHAN CHAIT

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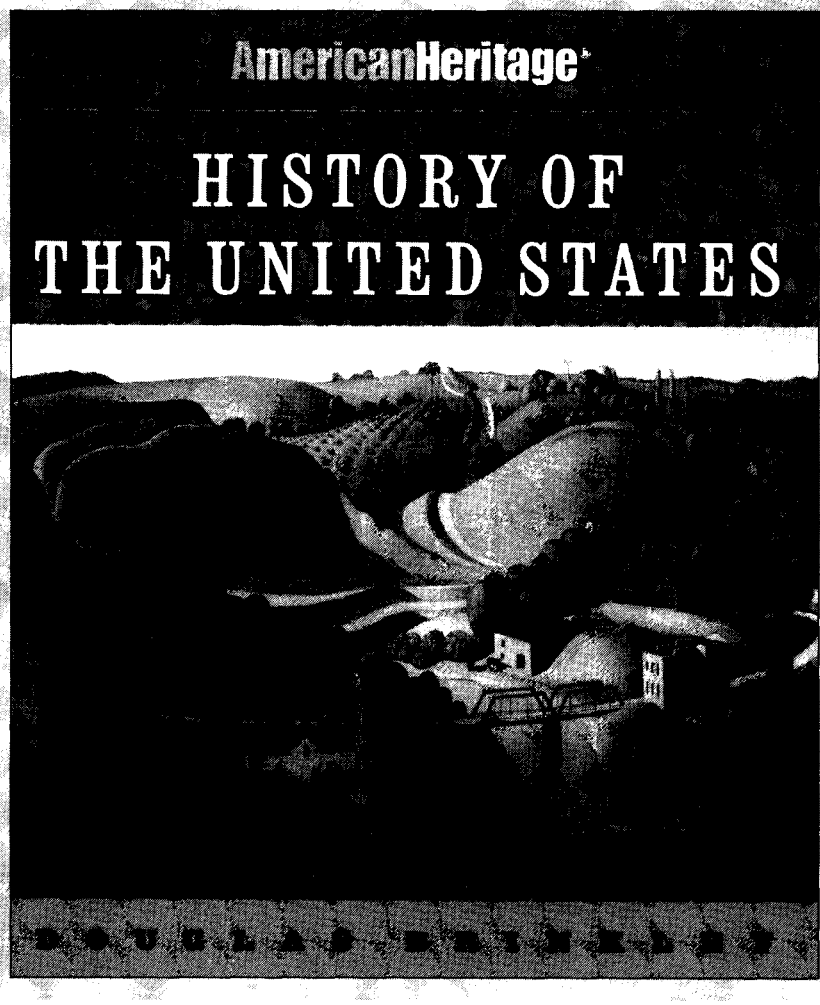

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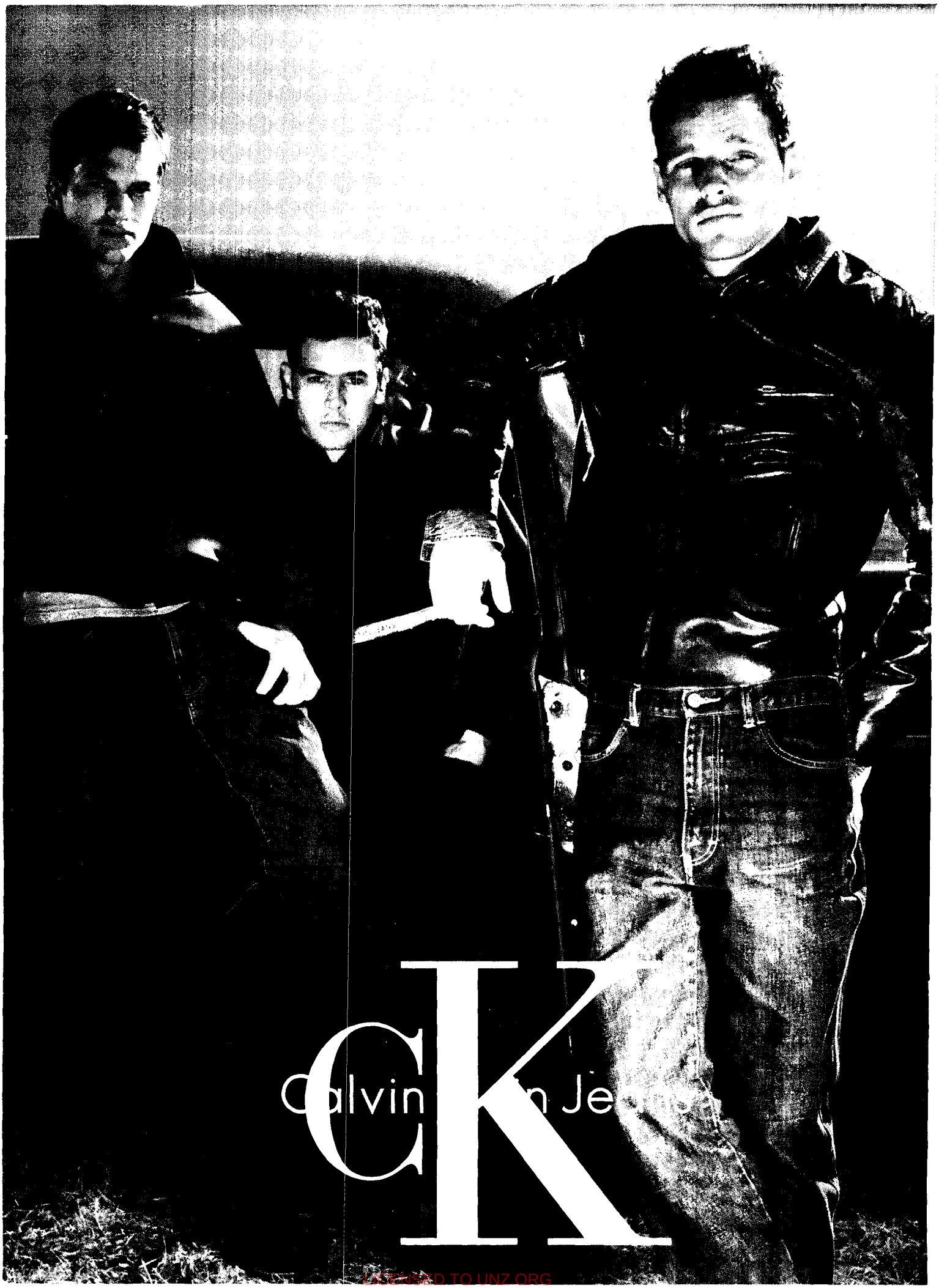

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